

فَصَيَّدَهُ بَرْدَهُ فُضِّلَ تَعْدِيلُ الْقَسْرِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

مَرَجَتْ دُمُوعًا بِرُحْنٍ مِنْ مَقْلَةٍ يَدِهِ	أَمِنْ تَذَكُّرٍ جَبْرَانٍ يَذِي سِرْكِ
وَأَوْمَضَ الْبَرْقُ فِي الظُّلُمَاءِ مِنْ دَامِغٍ	أَمْ هَبَّتِ الرِّيحُ مِنْ يَلْقَاءِ كَاظِمٍ
وَمَا لِقَابُكَ إِنْ ظَنَنْتَ اسْتَفِيقَ يَوْمٍ	لَا لِعَيْبِكَ إِنْ ظَنَنْتَ كَفُفَا هَمٍّ
مَا بَيْنَ مُنْجِيَةٍ مِنْهُ وَمُضْطَلَعٍ	لِيَحْشَبَا لِقَابَ أَنْ الْحُبَّ مُنْكَدٍ
وَلَا أَرَقْتُ لِذِكْرِ الْبَائِسِ وَالْعَلِيمِ	لَوْ لَا الْهَوَى لَمْ تَرْفُ دُمُوعًا عَلَى طَلَلٍ
يَدُ عَلَيْكَ عُدُولٌ لَدَمِيعٍ وَالسَّيْفِ	فَكَيْفَ نُبْكِرُ حُبًّا بَعْدَ مَا شَهِدْتُ
مِثْلَ الْبَهَادِرِ عَلَى خَدَّيْكَ وَالْعَيْنِ	وَأَثَبْتُ الْوَجْدَ حَطِيءَ عُبْرَةٍ وَضُنَى
وَالْحُبُّ يُعْزِزُ الدَّانِ بِأَلَا لِه	نَعْمَ سَرَى مَلِيفٌ مِنْ أَهْوَى قَارِئِي
مِثْلِي إِلَيْكَ وَلَوْ أَنْصَفْتُ لَمْ نَعْلَمِ	بِالْإِيْمِي فِي أَهْوَى الْعُذْرِي مُعَدِّ
عَنْ الْوُشَاةِ وَلَا دَائِي بِمُخْصِيَةٍ	عَدْنِكَ حَالِي لَا يَتَرْتِي بِمُسْتَبِيرِ
لَا لِحُبِّ عَنِ الْعُدَالِ فِي مَسْنَدِ	مُحْصَنِي النَّصْحِ لَكِنْ لَسْنَا نَسْمَعُ

ARABIAN POETRY

FOR

ENGLISH READERS.

EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES,

BY

W. A. CLOUSTON.

The Arabian Poets were the historians and moralists of the age; and ~~and~~ they sympathised with the prejudices, they inspired and crowned the virtues of their countrymen: the indissoluble union of generosity and valour was the darling theme of their song.—GIBBON.

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PREFACE.



THE history of the present volume is soon told. I was engaged in collecting material for illustration of the migrations and transformations of Popular European Tales and Fictions, and, in the course of my researches, had occasion to consult the works of Sir William Jones, where meeting with his translation of the MU'ALLAQĀT, or Seven Ancient Arabic Prize Poems, the idea occurred to me that a reprint of it would be acceptable to a few personal friends, interested in Asiatic literature. The project was readily approved; and it was suggested that these Poems might be interesting to a larger section of English readers. A tentative Prospectus was then issued, proposing to privately reprint Sir W. Jones' translation of the *Mu'allaqāt* and Carlyle's *Specimens of Arabian Poetry*. This proposal met with support, not only from English scholars and public libraries, but from many distinguished Orientalists; and it was resolved to add to the volume a selection from the Poetry contained in Hamilton's translation of part of the famous Arabian *Romance of 'Antar*. The connecting of these selections with an outline of the

leading incidents of the Romance was an afterthought. Even if Hamilton's volumes were readily accessible, which they are not, few mere English readers would care to go through his diffuse translation, which is rendered more unreadable by the magnificent poetry being printed without a break, often for two or more pages together. But the Epitome included in this volume will perhaps satisfy the curiosity of readers generally regarding a work of which assuredly a complete English translation will never be attempted.

THE SHORTER ARABIAN POEMS, translated by Dr. Carlyle, and entitled, "Specimens of Arabian Poetry"—first published in 1796, and again in 1810—are confessedly paraphrases in English verse rather than translations. The selections, together with the translator's anecdotal notices of some of the authors, furnish, nevertheless, a concise history of Arabian literature during the most flourishing period of the Muslim empire.

But this volume must possess an interest and value far beyond what might otherwise possibly attach to it, in containing the famous BURDA POEMS of K'AB and EL-BŪSĪRĪ, which are here presented for the first time in English, by Mr. J. W. Redhouse, whose high reputation for scholarship will be a sufficient guarantee to the English reader that the translations are as accurate as it is possible to render such enigmatical compositions into our language.

It may perhaps be thought somewhat strange that a mere English scholar—for my knowledge of

Arabic is as “nothing, and less than nothing, and vanity”—should have undertaken the task of editing a *thesaurus* of Arabian Poetry. But the original plan was very simple; and, to be perfectly candid, I thought myself not altogether incompetent to judge of what would likely be of interest to intelligent English readers. How the task has been performed, readers will, of course, decide for themselves.

The want of uniformity in the spelling of Arabic proper names in the several sections of the book is thus explained: Sir W. Jones’ translation of the MU‘ALLAQĀT is reprinted *literatim* as well as *verbatim*; and the same has been done in the case of Carlyle and others whose translations have been reproduced. Nearly every English Arabist of eminence has his own pet system of transliteration; and where doctors differ, who shall decide? In the Introduction, however, I have generally adopted Mr. Redhouse’s system, confident that in so doing I followed a safe guide.

The subjects of the Introduction are necessarily treated with brevity: the volume exceeds in bulk by two-thirds the limit originally proposed; but the Appendix Notes will be found to supply much of what may appear wanting in the introductory matter.

I take this opportunity to gratefully acknowledge the valuable help which Mr. Redhouse has rendered me in the course of my work: I had but to make known to him my difficulties in order to have them promptly removed; but all the shortcomings and

I have also to express my best thanks to all who have supported this humble attempt to popularise Arabian Poetry among English readers. By members of the Royal Asiatic Society generally the project has been warmly encouraged; and—although it can add nothing to their reputation—it affords me great pleasure to record that Mr. William Platt, Colonel W. Nassau Lees, Sir William Muir, Professor E. B. Cowell, of Cambridge, Rev. Professor R. Gandell, of Oxford, Professor W. Wright, of Cambridge, Rev. Professor W. P. Dickson, and Rev. Professor James Robertson, both of Glasgow University, were among the foremost to kindly express an interest in this little enterprise. I can but regret that the result, as here presented, should fall so far short of what it might have been in abler hands.

It only remains to add, that, in the course of this work, much out-of-the-way information had to be sought for, and I must have sorely tried the courtesy of my obliging friends: Mr. J. T. Clark, of the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh; Mr. James Lymburn, of the Glasgow University Library; and Mr. F. T. Barrett, of the Mitchell Public Library, Glasgow; who afforded me all the assistance in their power—directing my attention to little-known works, and furnishing me with useful bibliographical notes.

W. A. CLOUSTON.

GLASGOW, *December*, 1880.

THE FRONTISPIECE.

THIS is a lithographed reproduction, in facsimile (but only in black and white), of a page of a beautifully written and splendidly illuminated Arabic manuscript volume, in the possession of Mr. E. J. W. Gibb, whose translation of Mesīhī's Ode on Spring enriches the Appendix to the present work. The page contains the eleven first couplets of El-Būsīrī's celebrated Qasīda (Poem, or rather, Hymn) in praise of Muhammad, of which an English translation, by Mr. J. W. Redhouse, will be found in pages 319-341. It is hardly necessary to state, what almost every English reader must already know, that Arabic, like most Oriental languages, is written from right to left; but it may be explained that the space in the centre of the page separates the first and second hemistichs of each verse. For example: the first couplet is contained in the *first* line, at the top of *each* column; the second couplet, in the *second* line of *each* column; and so on, reading across the central division. Mr. Redhouse has favoured me with a transliteration of this page (not every Arabist can correctly read any Arabic manuscript), and a translation of the titles and the customary invocation. The titles of the poem and of the first section, at the top of the page, are:

qasīdatun burdatun faslun fī ta'dīlī 'n-nafsi

A Poem; a Mantle. A Section on the Justification
of the Carnal Man.

Then follows the invocation which is invariably placed at the beginning of every Muslim composition, whether secular or religious:

bi 'smi 'llāhi 'r-rahmānī 'r-rahīmī

In the name of GOD, the Most Merciful,
the All-Compassionate.

Our old European authors in like manner always headed their

writings with the sign of the cross, +. Thus, in the *King's Quair*, by James I., of Scotland :

And forthwithal my pen in hand I took,
And made a +, and thus began my book.

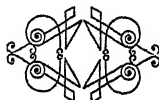
Modern Christians do not so literally follow the scriptural injunction : "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." But with Muslims it is no empty form.

The English reader will be interested in observing, in the following four first couplets of El-Būshī's Poem, in italic characters, the movement of the *qasīda* rhyme :

- 1 *e min tessekkuri jirāmin bi dhī-seleni*
mesejta dem'an jerà min muqletin bi demi
- 2 *em hebeti 'r-rīhu min tilqā'i katzimetin*
wa ewmadza 'l-barqu fī 'tz-tzalmā'i min idzami
- 3 *fa mǎ li 'ayney-ke in qulta 'kfufà hemetà*
wa mǎ li galbi-ke in qulta 'stefiq yehimi
- 4 *e yahsibu 's-sabbu enna 'l-hubba munketimun*
mǎ beyna munsejimin min-hu wa mudxtarimi

The two halves of the first distich, as above, rhyme ; and the final syllable (*mi*) of the second half of every succeeding distich, to the end of the poem, is the same as those of the hemistichs of the opening verse.

W. A. C.





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THE L POEM OF THE FOREIGNER

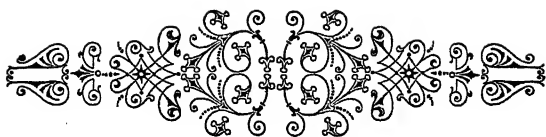
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INTRODUCTION.

An indescribable charm surrounds the early poetry of the Arabs. Dwelling in the wonderful creations of their genius with these ancient poets, you live, as it were, a new life. Cities, gardens, villages, the trace of even fields, left far out of sight, you get away into the free atmosphere of the desert; and—the trammels and conventionalities of settled society cast aside—you roam with the poet over the varied domain of Nature in all its freshness, artlessness, and freedom.—SIR WILLIAM MUIR, K.C.S.I., LL.D.



INTRODUCTION.

I.—THE ANCIENT ARABS.



IN the modern history of the world, no race or nation has figured so largely, or so widely and permanently influenced the destinies of mankind, as the race of shepherds, dwelling in tents, who have occupied the peninsula of Arabia almost since the Deluge. Roused, from the fatal lethargy of the gross idolatry into which they had long been sunk, by the enthusiasm of one man, who substituted for their vain superstitions the simple but sublime formula of belief, "There is but ONE sole God," in the space of less than a hundred years these people had overrun and conquered a great part of the then known world, which they held subject for several centuries, until, in their turn, they had to yield to more vigorous races. But wherever the Muslim gained footing, there his footprints are still to be seen; and the influence of the enlightened descendants of the first Arabian conquerors, who gave the nations the choice of the Qur'ān or the

scimitar, remains in European arts, sciences, and literature to this day.

[The early history of the Arabs, like that of other very ancient nations, is involved in great obscurity. Their country, or most part of it, seems from remote antiquity to have been called '*Ariba*, a name which it still retains. Regarding the origin of this name learned men differ in opinion. According to some, the name of '*Ariba* was derived from '*Arba*, a district of Tamana, where Ishmael dwelt; others say there was a town of this name in the neighbourhood of Makka. Tradition asserts that the name was derived from Ya'rub son of Qahtān, or Joktan, the grandson of Eber; while certain learned Hebraists would have it to be of Hebrew original, since the term *araba* in that language signifies *west*, and in the Scriptures the western part of the peninsula is called *eretz arab*, or *ereb*—the western country.

Ptolemy's division of Arabia into the "Stony," the "Desert," and the "Happy" was altogether unknown to the Arabs themselves. The best Oriental writers divide the peninsula into five provinces or kingdoms, namely: Yaman; Hijāz; Tahāma; Najd; and Yamāma. Of these the two first call for special notice.)

(The province of Yaman has always been famed for the fertility of its soil, and the mildness of its climate, which seems to realise the dreams of the poets in being a perpetual Spring. "The beauties of Yemen," says Sir W. Jones, "are proved

by the concurrent testimony of all travellers, by the descriptions of it in all the writings of Asia, and by the nature and situation of the country itself, which lies between the eleventh and fifteenth degrees of northern latitude, under a serene sky, and exposed to the most favourable influence of the sun : it is enclosed on one side by vast rocks and deserts, and defended on the other by a tempestuous sea ; so that it seems to have been designed by Providence for the most secure as well as the most beautiful region of the East. Its principal cities are : Sanaa, usually considered as its metropolis ; Zebîd, a commercial town, that lies in a large plain near the Sea of Omân ; and Aden, surrounded with pleasant gardens and woods. It is observable that *Aden*, in the Eastern dialects, is precisely the same word with *Eden*, which we apply to the garden of Paradise. It has two senses, according to a slight difference in its pronunciation : its first meaning is, *a settled abode* ; its second, *delight, softness, or tranquillity*. The word *Eden* had probably one of these senses in the sacred text, though we use it as a proper name. We may also observe that *Yemen* itself takes its name from a word which signifies *verdure* and *felicity* ; for in those sultry climates, the freshness of the shade and the coolness of water are ideas almost inseparable from that of happiness ; and this may be a reason why most of the Oriental nations agree in a tradition concerning a delightful spot where the first inhabitants of the earth were placed before their fall. (The ancients,

who gave the name of *Eudaimon*, or Happy, to this country, either meant to translate the word *Yemen*, or, more probably only alluded to the valuable spice trees and balsamic plants that grow in it, and, without speaking poetically, give a real perfume to the air." Such a charming land and climate may well be supposed to have been the seat of pastoral poetry; and, indeed, the best poets which ancient Arabia produced were those of Yaman.)

The province of Hijāz is so named, either because it divides Najd from Tahama, or because it is surrounded by mountains. Its principal cities, Makka and Madīna, are most sacred in the estimation of every Muslim.) Makka is the *Qibla*, or place in the direction of which Muslims everywhere turn their faces in prayer: it contains the Sacred Ka'ba, or Cubical House,—the *Baytu'llāh*, or House of God—whither flock unnumbered pilgrims from all parts of the world of Islām once every year;* and the sacred well, Zem Zem—the self-same well, saith tradition, near which Hagar sat with her son Ishmael when she was comforted by the angel. Moreover, Makka is

* According to Arab tradition, Abraham built the first Ka'ba on the same spot where the present building stands. Muslim writers go farther, and say that Adam himself erected a temple there, and that it was built and rebuilt ten times. (For a full description and history of the Ka'ba, see Burton's *Pilgrimage to el-Medinah and Meccah*, vol. iii., chapter xxvi.) Putting idle legends aside, the antiquity of the Ka'ba reaches far beyond the Christian era: we learn from Greek writers that the Temple at Makka had been visited by pilgrims time out of mind.

the birthplace of Muhammad. El-Madīna—"the city," emphatically—was called Yathrub before the Prophet retreated thither : it contains his tomb, which is, of course, also visited by the devout.

⌋ Oriental writers divide the inhabitants of Arabia into two classes : the old lost Arabs, descended from 'Ad and Thamūd (who were destroyed by God because of their unbelief), and others famous in tradition ; and the present Arabs, who are sprung from two different stocks : Qahtān, the same with Joktan the son of Eber, the fourth in descent from Noah ; and 'Adnān, who was descended in a direct line from Ishmael, the son of Abraham and Hagar.* Those descended from Qahtān are called *'al-'Arabu-'l-'āribā*, genuine or pure Arabs (some authors, however, consider the old lost tribes as the only pure Arabs) ; those from 'Adnān, *'al-'Arabu-'l-musta'ribā*, naturalised or insititious Arabs.—For several centuries many of the Arabian tribes were under the government of the descendants of Qahtān ; Ya'rub, one of his sons, having founded the kingdom of Yaman, and Jurhum, another son, that of Hijāz.

⌋ "The perpetual independence of the Arabs," says Gibbon, "has been the theme of praise among strangers and natives ; and the arts of controversy transform this singular event into a prophecy and a miracle, in favour of the posterity of Ishmael. Some

* From the uncertainty of the descents between Ishmael and 'Adnān, the Arabs of this stock usually reckon their genealogies no higher than 'Adnān.

exceptions, that can neither be dissembled nor eluded, render this mode of reasoning as indiscreet as it is superfluous : (the kingdom of Yemen has been successively subdued by the Abyssinians, the Persians, the Sultans of Egypt, and the Turks ; the holy cities of Mecca and Medina have repeatedly bowed under a Scythian tyrant ; and the Roman province of Arabia embraced the peculiar wilderness in which Ishmael and his sons must have pitched their tents in the face of their brethren.) Yet these exceptions are temporary or local ; the body of the nation has escaped the yoke of the most powerful monarchies : the arms of Sesostris and Cyrus, of Pompey and Trajan, could never achieve the conquest of Arabia ; the present sovereign of the Turks may exercise a shadow of jurisdiction, but his pride is reduced to solicit the friendship of a people whom it is dangerous to provoke and fruitless to attack. (The obvious causes of their freedom are inscribed on the character and country of the Arabs. Many ages before Mahomet, their intrepid valour had been severely felt by their neighbours in offensive and defensive war. The patient and active virtues of a soldier are insensibly nursed in the habits and discipline of a pastoral life.) The care of the sheep and camels is abandoned to the women of the tribe ; but the martial youth, under the banner of the emir, is ever on horseback and in the field, to practise the exercise of the bow, the javelin, and the scimitar. The long memory of their independence is the firmest pledge of its

perpetuity ; and succeeding generations are animated to prove their descent and to maintain their inheritance."

The religion of most of the Arabs before the time of Muhammad was rank idolatry. The Sabian religion—worship of the sun, the fixed stars, and the planets, and of angels and lower intelligences—overran the whole nation, although there also existed among them a considerable number of Christians, Jews, and Magians.) It was perhaps natural for the Arabs to be led into the worship of the celestial luminaries : a pastoral life requiring continual observation of their motions, in order to forecast changes of the weather, they would be very easily induced to ascribe the blessing of rain to a divine power that resided in them. (The constellations, which divide the zodiac into twenty-eight parts, through one of which the moon passes every night, were called *anwā'*, or the Houses of the Moon. In the Temple of Makka were 360 idols, one for each day of their year ; of these the chief were Lat and 'Uzza, by which they were wont to swear, though such an oath was not considered so binding as the following, from which it will be seen that, besides their imaginary deities, they also believed in a supreme GOD : " I swear, by Him who rendered the lofty mountains immovable, the Giver of life and death, that I will never betray you, either in word or in deed." If a man broke this oath, the same day he would bark like a dog, and the flesh would fall off his bones.

Some tribes believed in a future state, and when a warrior died his camel was tied to his grave and there left to perish, in order that its master should ride it on the Day of Reckoning, as befitted his rank ; others had no faith either in a past creation or a resurrection, ascribing the origin of all things to nature and their dissolution to age. But, for the most part, the pagan Arabs concerned themselves but little as to their future destiny—content if their daily wants were supplied, they hardly looked beyond the present.

(Of their virtues and their vices much may be learned from the reliques of their ancient poetry. Hospitality was greatly esteemed among them, while avarice, in men, was held in supreme contempt. The bitterest taunt by one tribe to another was to say that their men had not the heart to give, nor their women to deny : men being esteemed for liberality and courage ; women, for parsimony and beauty. The fires which they kindled on the tops of hills, and kept burning during the night, to guide travellers to their tents, and hence called “hospitality fires,” are often referred to in their early poetry.) But their system of morals, observes Sir W. Jones, “generous and enlarged as it seems to have been in the minds of a few illustrious chiefs,* was on the whole miserably depraved for a century at least before Muhammad :

* Hātim, chief of the tribe of Tā’ī, and Hāsn, of the tribe of Fazāra, are greatly celebrated for their profuse hospitality. The name of Hātim is still synonymous in the East with the utmost liberality.

the distinguishing virtues which they boasted of inculcating and practising were, a contempt of riches and even of death," but in the age immediately before the time of the Prophet, "their liberality had deviated into mad profusion, their courage into ferocity, and their patience into an obstinate spirit of encountering fruitless dangers."

The general mode of life of the tent-dwelling pagan Arabs was much the same as that of their descendants the Bedawis of the present day. The wants of a pastoral life are few. To the Arab of the desert, the camel—like the reindeer to the Laplander—is an invaluable gift of Providence. Strong and patient, the camel is capable of carrying a load weighing a thousand pounds, and of making a journey of several days' duration without water; while the dromedary, of a lighter and more active build, is celebrated by their poets as outstripping the ostrich in speed. The long and fine hair of the camel, which is cast periodically, was woven into cloth for their tents and their garments; its milk, cooled in the wind, furnished a refreshing and nourishing drink; its flesh was their chief food, together with the flesh of horses on festal occasions. Camel's milk, however, was not their only beverage: the old Arabs—those of the deserts as well as those of the cities—seem to have been greatly addicted to wine-drinking, and intoxication was the rule rather than the exception at their frequent feasts.) Even the women appear to have freely indulged in wine—in the absence of their lords, if not with their sanction

and in their presence. The pre-Islāmite bards all celebrate the exhilarating effects of wine, and some even boast of their ability to drink the whole store of the vintner, "at one sitting." It was therefore not without reason perhaps that Muhammad, the great Lawgiver, sternly interdicted the use among Muslims of that salutary yet perilous beverage, and of all other intoxicating drinks.—The Arabs are praised by all ancient writers for their respect for women; their scrupulously keeping their word; and for their quickness of apprehension and their penetration, and—the desert tribes especially—the vivacity of their wit. On the other hand, they were characterised by an eager desire for the property of their neighbours, an unconquerable fondness for strife and bloodshed, and by their vengeful disposition.

One of the barbarous customs which prevailed among the independent tribes of Arabia was the system of private war, or tribal and family feuds, similar in their origin, duration, and ferocity to those feuds which existed among the Highland clans of Scotland until within comparatively recent times. The murder of an Arab chief by the people of another tribe was sufficient to kindle a sanguinary war between the two tribes and their collateral branches, which often lasted for a generation, and even longer. For every relative that had been slain, the Arabian, when his tribe were victorious over that of the slayer, singled out a captive, and, as a point of honour, coolly put them to death. But avarice

sometimes mitigated this brutal custom: the nearest relative of the deceased was permitted to waive the blood-vengeance in consideration of a fine, the amount of which, about the time of Muhammad's birth, seems to have been ten camels. The Prophet endeavoured to soften or regulate the vengeful disposition of his countrymen by several passages in the Qur'ān; and in later times, in the Sunnat, or Traditions, almost equal in authority with the Qur'ān itself, the amount of the bloodwit was increased to one hundred camels. "In the East," says Richardson, "the relations of the principals in a quarrel seem to have been bound by honour and custom to espouse their party and to revenge their death: one of the highest reproaches with which one Arabian could upbraid another being an accusation of having left the blood of his friend unrevenged."

The custom of setting apart certain months of the year, during which all warfare was unlawful, must have acted as a wholesome check upon the sanguinary disposition of the pagan Arabs. The eleventh, twelfth, first, and seventh months were thus held sacred; the twelfth, *Dhu'l-hajj*, being, as the name implies, the month of pilgrimage to Makka. "During these months whoever was in fear of his enemy lived in security; so that if a man met the murderer of his father or his brother, he durst not offer him violence." Similar in object, though not in observance, to the sacred months of the old Arabs, were the *Treuga Dei* and the *Pax Regis* of Europe during

the Middle Ages.* Muhammad retained the sacred months, but gave permission to attack the enemies of Islām at all times.

The unnatural practice, which prevailed among some tribes, of burying their female children alive as soon as they were born, had its origin perhaps in a desire to save them from the ill-usage to which female captives were often subjected.† They also sacrificed them to their idols, in common with some of the neighbouring nations. It is said that even the Greeks themselves in the earlier ages destroyed their female offspring. Muhammad, of course, abolished this horrible custom.

Divination and augury were much in vogue among the old Arabs. Arrows, without heads or feathers, were employed in divination, and were usually kept in the temples dedicated to local or favourite idols.

* The *Treuga Dei*, or Truce of God, was adopted about the year 1032, in consequence of a pretended revelation of a bishop of Aquitaine. It was published in the time of a general calamity; and it made so deep an impression on the minds of men, that a general cessation of private hostilities was observed, we are told, for seven years; and a resolution formed, that no man should in time to come molest his adversary from Thursday evening till Monday morning. The *Pax Regis*, or Royal Truce, was an ordinance of Louis VIII., King of France, A.D. 1245; by which the friends or vassals of a murdered or injured person were prohibited from commencing hostilities till forty days after the commission of the offence.—*Richardson*.

† See Epitome of the Romance of Antar, in the present volume—pp. 244 and 249.

The idol Habal in the Temple of Makka, which was destroyed by Muhammad himself when he purified the Ka'ba, had seven such arrows in its hand ; but three was the number commonly used. On one of these was written : "Command me, Lord !" on another : "Forbid me, Lord !" and the third was blank. If the blank arrow happened to be drawn, they were again mixed (in a sack), and drawn until a decisive answer was obtained. No enterprise of moment was undertaken without consulting either these divining arrows or the flight of a bird : if it flew to the right, it was ominous of good fortune ; but if to the left, the intended journey or enterprise was abandoned.

(The principal dialects spoken by the Arab tribes were those of Himyar (or Yaman) and of the Quraysh. The language of Himyar seems to have been but little cultivated ; that of the Quraysh, called the pure, or defecated, and styled in the Qur'ān, "the perspicuous and clear Arabic," ultimately became the language of all Arabia. The Quraysh were the most learned and refined of all the Western Arabs : carrying on an extensive trade with every neighbouring state, and being, for many generations before the time of Muhammad, the custodians of the Ka'ba, to which a vast number of pilgrims flocked once a year from all parts of Arabia, and from every country where the Sabian religion prevailed, refinement and learning were a natural consequence of their intercourse with strangers of the best classes.)

Poetry and eloquence, but especially poetry, were assiduously cultivated by the Arabs. "With them," says Professor E. H. Palmer, "it was not merely a passion, it was a necessity ; for, as their own proverb has it, 'the records of the Arabs are the verses of their bards.' What the Ballad was in preserving the memory of the Scottish Border wars, such was the Eclogue in perpetuating the history and traditions of the various tribes of the Arabian peninsula. The peculiar construction of their language and the richness of its vocabulary afforded remarkable facilities for the metrical expression of ideas ; and accordingly the art of *Munāzarah*, or poetical disputation, in which two rival chieftains advanced their respective claims to pre-eminence in extemporary verse, was brought to the highest perfection among them."

To their poetry, indeed, the Arabians have been chiefly indebted even for the preservation of their language. The old Arabs set great store by the genealogy of their families, and as this was the subject of frequent and bitter disputes, their poems preserved the distinction of descents, the rights of tribes, and the memory of great actions. The principal occasions of rejoicing among the desert tribes were : the birth of a boy ; the fall of a foal of generous breed ; and the rise of a great poet capable of vindicating their rights, and of immortalising their renown.

Such, in brief, were some of the characteristics of those ancient people, who, under the banner of Islām, spread like an inundation over Asia : "delighting in

eloquence, acts of liberality, and martial achievements, they made the whole earth red as wine with the blood of their foes, and the air like a forest of canes with their tall spears": and in a very few years created an empire larger than that of the Romans themselves.

II.—THE MU'ALLAQĀT;

OR, SEVEN ANCIENT ARABIC PRIZE POEMS.



ABOUT the end of the sixth century—the most brilliant period in the ancient history of the Arabs—the Arabic language attained its greatest perfection, in consequence, it is said, of the poetical contests which took place at the annual fair that was held at 'Ukātẓ during the month of pilgrimage (*Dhu'l-hajj*). "For, as every tribe had many words peculiar to itself," says Sir W. Jones, "the poets, for the convenience of the measure, or sometimes for their singular beauty, made use of them all; and as the poems became popular these words were by degrees incorporated with the whole language: like a number of little streams which meet together in one channel, and, forming a most bountiful river, flow rapidly into the sea." The several tribes of the peninsula vied with each other in sending their best poets to represent them at the 'Ukātẓ assembly. The bards having recited their eclogues—in which there was little variety of subject: most of them commencing with

a lament for the departure of a fair one, and a description of her personal charms; passing abruptly to an account of the noble qualities of the poet's horse or camel, or a eulogium on his tribe, and his own prowess in battle—judgment was impartially passed on their respective merits; and those poems which were considered as most excellent were afterwards written upon silk, in characters of gold, and hung up in the Temple—hence, it has been supposed, they were called *Mu'allaqāt*, or "Suspended," and also *Mudhahhabāt*, or "Gilded" (not "Golden," as the term is usually rendered).^{*} Of these "Prize Poems" seven, entitled THE MU'ALLAQĀT, *par excellence*, are preserved in many of the European libraries: they are the composition of IMRA'U-'L-QAYS; 'TARAFA; ZUHAYR; LEBID; 'ANTARA; 'AMR; and EL-HĀRITH;

^{*}The actual meaning of these terms, as applied to the "Seven Ancient Arabic Prize Poems," is, however, a vexed question among modern European Arabists. The current interpretations, that these Poems were entitled *Mu'allaqāt* (in the singular, *Mu'allaqā*), either because they were suspended on the Ka'ba, or because each of the so-called Poems consists of fragments or short pieces "hung" or strung together, are utterly rejected by Professor W. Ahlwardt, the eminent German Orientalist; as also the surmise of Herr Von Kremer, that the term is derived from another meaning of the word—"written down from the dictation of the Rāwīs" (Reciters of Poetry): he rather regards the name as being analogous with the other term, *Mudhahhabāt*, or gilded, and to signify "set with ornaments"—pre-eminent, or "golden" verses. The same learned Professor moreover considers the accounts of poetical contests, at 'Ukātẓ and other places, as mere fictions of Oriental writers.

and in the Pocock MSS., No. 174, preserved in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, are some forty others which were also hung up in the Ka'ba.

To Sir William Jones, who first directed the attention of the learned in Europe to the rich treasures contained in the ancient literature of Hindustan, belongs also the honour of having been the first to translate the Seven Arabic Prize Poems into a European language. In 1782 was published his English translation of the MU'ALLAQĀT, with Arguments, and the original texts in Roman characters.* And this was

* In quarto, entitled : The Moállakât ; or Seven Arabian Poems which were Suspended on the Temple at Mecca, with a Translation and Arguments. By William Jones, Esq. London, 1782. From the "Advertisement" prefixed to this work we learn that Sir W. Jones purposed furnishing a Preliminary Discourse which was to comprise "observations on the antiquity of the Arabian language and letters ; on the dialects and characters of Himyar and Koraish, with accounts of some Himyarick poets ; on the manners of the Arabs in the age immediately preceding that of Mahomed ; on the temple at Mecca, and the *Moállakât*, or pieces of poetry *suspended* on its walls or gate ; lastly, on the lives of the *Seven Poets*, with a critical history of their works, and the various copies or editions of them preserved in Europe, Asia and Africa." There were also to be Notes, giving "authorities and reasons for the translation of controverted passages ; elucidating all the obscure couplets, and exhibiting or proposing amendments of the text ; directing the reader's attention to particular beauties, or pointing out remarkable defects ; and throwing light on the images, figures, and allusions of the Arabian poets, by citations, either from writers of their own country, or from such of our European travellers as best illustrate the ideas and customs of Eastern

not only the first, but it remains the only complete English translation of these remarkable compositions; for, strange as it may appear, no attempt has been made by our modern English Arabists to give their unlearned countrymen a more accurate translation than was perhaps possible in the time of Sir W. Jones.

The original metre employed in Arab poetry was the *Rajaz*, a short iambic verse, always ending with

nations." This elaborate scheme, however, was never carried out.—From a letter addressed to his learned Dutch friend, H. A. Schultens, in June, 1781, we learn that Sir W. Jones was guided in his translation of the *Mu'allagāt* by the Commentary of Tabrizi, the paraphrase of Zauzani, and other native grammarians.

It may be added, that, in issuing his translation of the *Mu'allagāt*, with the original texts transliterated into European characters, Sir W. Jones solicited the co-operation—the strictures and annotations—of continental scholars. "But," he remarks, "the Discourse and Notes are ornamental only, and not essential to the work"—surely a curious statement, from an English reader's point of view, at least; since without some previous knowledge of the habits and manners of the old Arabs, and some notes explanatory of obscure allusions, these compositions must be in a great measure unintelligible to general readers. But Sir W. Jones doubtless meant that the proposed Discourse and Notes were unnecessary to scholars, who might consult the native commentaries. However this may be, it is probable that to the absence of explanatory notes is due the circumstance that his translation of the *Mu'allagāt* had not been reprinted since it was included in the editions of his collected works: 6 vols., quarto, 1799, and 13 vols., octavo, 1807.

the same rhyme : this was the measure of the rude songs of the camel-drivers ; and it was well adapted for extemporary verse, to express defiance, contempt, or panegyric. The Mu'allāqa Poems are composed in verses, or couplets (called *bayts*), of double the length of the *Rajas*, and consisting of two halves or hemistichs ; the two hemistichs of the first *bayt* invariably rhyming with each other, and with the second hemistich of each succeeding couplet. This form of verse is called the *Qasīda* (Kasīdah, or Casida) ; and, being that adopted in the composition of the Prize Poems, it has been thought that the term was derived from the word *Qasā*, which signifies an *object* or *aim* : these poems (or Qasidas) having been composed with the special object of obtaining pre-eminence at the poetical contests.* But this generally received interpretation of the term Qasīda is rejected by Professor Ahlwardt, who ascribes it to another signification of the word *Qasā*—"the breaking of things into halves": each *bayt*, or verse, being divided into hemistichs (as is shown in the Frontispiece to the present volume), the whole poem may be said to consist of two halves. Sixteen different measures

* Some commentators say that praise-poems, or eclogues in praise of great men, which were always composed in this form of verse, first obtained the name of Qasīdas : panegyric being their special *object* or *aim*. Even the nature of the Qasīda is variously reported : some have said that it must be over three distichs (the lowest Arabic plural) ; others, over seven ; and others, over sixteen.—A specimen of the Qasīda theme in

are known in Arabian prosody, four of which are adopted in the Mu'allāqa Poems; but the movement of the rhyme (*qasīda*) is the same in them all.

The authors of the MU'ALLAQĀT were all men of high poetical genius, although they were in no sense possessed of literary culture—indeed, it is almost certain that scarcely one of them could read and write. They were *natural* poets, whose ignorance of letters was fully compensated by a nice sense of rhythm and the faculty of clearly and vigorously expressing in their rich and copious language what they thought and felt;—impulsive children of the desert, whose passions had free scope for good and evil; who were capable of the most intense affection, and of the most bitter hatred: whose strong feelings found vent in flowing verse.

A century had elapsed after the rise of Islām when the fragments of the early poetry, and anecdotes of the most famous bards of the Arabian peninsula—especially the poets of Yaman—which had been handed down orally from generation to generation, were finally reduced to writing. How much of the traditions regarding the pagan Arab poets is fabulous cannot now be ascertained; but to the task of investigating the authenticity of the so-called reliques of ancient Arabic poetry the most learned scholars of Germany have for some time been devoted, with results which are more or less conclusive, and which will be touched upon in the next section of this

Introduction. The following particulars regarding the several authors of the MU'ALLAQĀT are gleaned from the best Oriental writers.

IMRA'U-'L-QAYS

the son of Hujr, the son of Harith, was a prince of the tribe of Kinda. His real name was Hunduj, and he acquired the epithet of *Imra'u-'l-Qays* ("the man of adversity") from his misfortunes.* Muhammad called him *el-Malikū 'ds-Dziltīl*, "the most erring prince," as being the best of the pagan Arab poets, whom, he also said, Imr' would head on their way to the place of woe. His love adventure with a damsel of another tribe, alluded to in vv. 8-13 of his Mu'allāqa, and detailed in the translator's Argument, so exasperated his father that he expelled him from the tribe; and for many years the poet led a wandering, reckless life among the Arabs of the desert, a life of peril and often of privation; occasionally varied by a halt at some well-watered spot, where he and his comrades feasted

* In Sir W. Jones' "Genealogy of the Seven Poets," prefixed to his translation of the *Mu'alluqāt*, the father of Imra'u-'l-Qays ('Amrīo'l-Kais) is called Maiah; his grandfather, Rabeiah (who was the father of Kulayb, the proud chief, whose murder caused a long and bloody war between the tribes of Taglib and Bakr); and his great grandfather, Harith. Possibly "Maiah" was another name of Hujr, the father of Imra'u-'l-Qays; however, the asterisk after the name in Sir W. Jones' list evidently indicates that it was doubtful.—According to Professor Ahlwardt, the poet was also styled Abū Zayd (father of a son called Zayd), son of Hujr, son of Harith.

on camel's flesh and caroused, while singing-girls amused them with their lively songs. The poet was thus engaged, drinking and gaming, when a messenger from his tribe arrived, and announced that his father had been slain by his rebellious subjects. Imra'u'l-Qays made no answer ; and on his companion stopping his game, he simply said : " Play on." But when the game was finished, he remarked to his comrade : " I would not have thy game interrupted ;" and then, turning to the messenger, he inquired minutely into all the circumstances of his father's assassination. Having learned the particulars, he said : " As a youth, my father banished me from his house ; as a man, it is my duty to avenge his death. But to-day we shall drink ; to-morrow, sobriety : wine, to-day ; business, to-morrow."

With an army of the tribes of Taglib and Bakr (who were not then at variance), Imra'u'l-Qays marched against his rebellious people, who, however, escaped his vengeance, by placing themselves under the protection of the King of Hira. Upon this his followers forsook him, and he then sought help of the Himyarite prince Marthad el-Khayr, who promised him 500 men, but died soon afterwards ; and his successor showed little disposition to assist the unfortunate prince.

At this juncture, Imra'u'l-Qays had recourse to divination, as was customary among the pagan Arabs before any enterprise of moment was undertaken. The prince drew the lot with the three

arrows of "order," "defence," and "expectation"; and having drawn the second one three times in succession, he broke the arrows and threw them in the face of the idol, exclaiming: "If they had killed thy father, thou wouldst not limit thyself to defence alone!"

Finding he could obtain no assistance from the prince of Yaman, he next proceeded to the court of the Emperor Justinian; but unfortunately an Arab was there whose father had been killed by the poet's father, and he prejudiced the Emperor's mind against Imra'u'l-Qays, who quitted the court with all speed. But the Emperor, incited by his Arab courtier, sent a messenger after him with a poisoned garment. The poet was overtaken at Ancyra, and no sooner had he put on the fatal garment than he was seized with dreadful pains, his body was covered with ulcers, and soon afterwards he expired in great agony. His last words were: "He, from whose lips flowed eloquence, at whose sword-strokes flowed the blood of his enemies, at whose feasts flowed rich wine—he came to Ancyra, and no farther."

T A R A F A

the son of El-'Abd, the son of Sufyān, was of the tribe of Muzayna, a branch of the Banu Bakr (sons of Bakr, or Becr), and hence he was surnamed El-Muzanī. He may be said truly to have "lisp'd in numbers," for at the tender age of seven he gave proof of his poetical genius. He was travelling with his uncle, and, the party resting for the night on the banks of a clear

stream, Tarafa—boy-like—set snares to catch larks ; but not having succeeded when they resumed their journey in the morning, the little poet expressed himself on the occasion in verses to the following effect :

Rejoice, O lark ! in the expanse of the plain : thou enjoyest free air—sing, then, and increase in security. Fly round about, and pick up all that thou canst desire : the bird-catcher is gone—rejoice then at his departure ! The snare is removed, and thou hast nothing more to fear ;—but yet fear thou always ; for at length thou shalt be taken !

The occasion which gave rise to his Mu'allāqa—the loss of the camels belonging jointly to himself and his elder brother—is related in the translator's Argument. C. de Perceval states that 'Amr the son of Marthad, one of the noble chiefs whom the poet compliments in v. 81, sent for Tarafa, and said to him : "Children God alone can give thee ; but as to goods I will set thee on the same footing with my own sons." He then called his seven sons and three grandsons, and ordered each of them to give the poet ten camels ; thus making good the loss upon which his brother had so bitterly reproached him.

The most remarkable event in Tarafa's brief life is his tragical end. 'Amr the son of Hind, king of Hira, had sent Tarafa and Mutalammis, also a famous poet, to be companions to his younger brother Qābūs, whom he intended for his successor. Qābūs, it appears, was greatly addicted to drinking, and was often discovered intoxicated ; and both poets composed some very satirical verses on him and the

King. Enraged at these lampoons (which probably came to his knowledge through some "good-natured friend"), 'Amr gave each of the poets a "Bellerophon letter" to the governor of Bahrayn, in which he was ordered to put the bearer to death. Mutalammis, suspecting the designs of the King, broke open his letter, and showed it to a friend, who read it to him; and on learning the contents, he destroyed it, and advised Tarafa to turn back with him. But Tarafa, perhaps thinking that his friend had been imposed upon by the reader of the letter,* declined his advice, and continued his fatal journey. On delivering his letter, the governor of Bahrayn, carrying out the orders of 'Amr, cut off the poet's hands and feet, and then caused him to be buried alive. Tarafa was only twenty-six years old when he thus miserably perished.

ZUHAYR

the son of Abū Sulmā, Rabī'a, was distinguished from early youth for his poetical genius. He was a special favourite of his grand-uncle Bashama, who was himself a famous poet; yet, when the old man felt his end approaching, he divided his goods among his relations and left nothing to Zuhayr. "Wilt thou leave me nothing?" asked Zuhayr.—"I leave thee," said the patriarch, "the finest part of my inheritance—my talent for poetry."—"But that is already mine," replied Zuhayr.—"Nay," said the old man, "all

* From this it would appear that the poet Mutalammis, and probably Tarafa also, could not read.

Arabia knows that poesy is an inheritance of my family, and that it went from me to thee." Zuhayr got a legacy, nevertheless.

His Mu'allaqa was composed, on the conclusion of the War of Dāhis, in honour of el-Hārith son of 'Auf and Harim son of Sinān, the peace-makers. Zuhayr also composed a great number of eclogues in praise of Harim, the son of Salmā, who had sworn not only to grant all the poet's requests, but to give him, for every poem he composed in his praise, either a female slave or a horse. This liberality rendered Zuhayr so bashful in the presence of his patron, that whenever the poet chanced to enter a company in which Harim was, he would say: "I salute you all, excepting Harim, although he is the best among you."

A son of Harim having recited to the Khalif 'Omar one of Zuhayr's eclogues in praise of his family, 'Omar remarked: "Zuhayr has said many beautiful things about you."—"True," answered the son of Harim; "but we have made him as many fine presents."—"What you gave him," said 'Omar, "will perish through course of time; but his praises will endure for ever."—"Omar, though no great friend of poets or admirer of poetry, always spoke favourably of Zuhayr, because in his poems he had praised only such as really deserved praise, as Harim the son of Salmā.

Umm Aufā, whom he mentions in the first verse of his Mu'allaqa, was Zuhayr's first wife, whom he

divorced on account of her jealousy, but of this he afterwards repented. The children she bore him died young. A second wife gave him two sons: Ka'b, author of the celebrated *qasīda* entitled *el-Burda*, or the Mantle (generally known throughout the East as the *Bānat Su'ādū*, from the opening words of the poem: "Su'ād hath departed"), which he recited before Muhammad (A.D. 630), when he made his peace with the Prophet, and professed himself a Muslim; and Bujayr, who was an early convert to Islām.

According to the *Kilūbu'l-Agānī* (Book of Songs), compiled by Abū'l-Faraj el-Isfahani, Muhammad saw Zuhayr when he was a hundred years old, and exclaimed: "God grant me a refuge from his Devil"—meaning, his cunning in song; and it is added that before the Prophet had quitted the house, Zuhayr was dead. Another account is that Zuhayr foretold to his sons Ka'b and Bujayr the advent of Muhammad, and earnestly recommended them to give ear to the Apostle's teaching when he did come; but that Zuhayr was dead before Muhammad began his mission.

LEBĪD

(or Labīd) was the son of Rabī'a, of the Banū Kilāb, who, because of his great liberality, was called *Rabī'atu'l-muqtirīn*, that is, "The Spring of the indigent ones." Lebīd's *kunya*, or bye name, was Abū 'Aqil. His uncle was 'Abū Bizā'ir, 'Amir, son of

Mālik, surnamed *Mulā'ibu-l-'Asinna*,—"the player with lances." While yet a mere youth, Lebīd accompanied a deputation of his tribe, headed by his famous uncle, to the court of Nu'mān of Hira, where, by a satirical poem, which he composed almost extempore and recited before the king, he effected the disgrace of a courtier who was obnoxious to his tribe.

Lebīd is one of the poets who belonged to "the time of the Ignorance" and also to Islām. Various accounts are given of the circumstance which led to his conversion. According to the *Agānī*, Lebīd was one of a deputation that waited upon the Prophet after the death of the poet's brother 'Arbad (who was killed by a stroke of lightning a day or two after he had made an impious speech against the fundamental doctrine of Islām), and the aged poet then and there professed himself a convert. Others say that it was the custom for poets in those days to affix their verses to the gate of the Ka'ba, as a general challenge against the next assembly at 'Ukātz, and that Lebīd had put up the following poem (translated by Mr. C. J. Lyall):

Yea, everything is vain, except only God alone,

and every pleasant thing must one day vanish away !

And all the race of men—there shall surely come among them
a Fearful Woe, whereby their fingers shall grow pale :

And every mother's son, though his life be lengthened out
to the utmost bound, comes home at last to the Grave :

And every man shall know one day his labour's worth,
when his loss or gain is cast up on the Judgment Day.

These verses were universally admired, and for some time no one ventured to rival them, until Muhammad placed the opening passages of the second chapter of the Qur'ān by the side of them. Lebīd was struck with their sublimity, and, declaring that they must have been written by divine inspiration, tore down his own verses, and immediately professed himself a Muslim. From that time he renounced all poetry; having, it is said, only composed one couplet after his conversion :

Praise be to GOD, that my end came not
till He had clad me with the robe of Islām !

Muhammad acknowledged that no pagan poet had ever produced nobler verses than those of Lebīd above quoted.

After his conversion, Lebīd settled in the city of Kūfa, where he died, about the end of the reign of Mu'āwiya (A.D. 660), at the age of 157, says Ibn Qutayba, or 145, according to the notice of him in the *Agānī*, "of which he lived ninety in the Ignorance, and the rest under Islām." The following is a translation of the verses Lebīd is said to have composed when he was considerably over a hundred and twenty years old :

Time in his lengthened chain of years has bound
Our mortal race, nor e'er his conqueror found :
I've seen him pass by day, I've seen by night,
And still, unchanged, return with morning's light.
Time, like Lebīd, grows older every day,
But waxes stronger, while I waste away.

The governor of Kūfa once sent for Lebīd and desired him to recite one of his poems. Lebīd recited the second chapter of the Qur'ān (entitled "The Cow"), saying, when he had finished, "God has given me this in exchange for poesy since I became a Muslim." The Khalīf 'Omar, on being informed of this, added 500 dirhems to the 2000 Lebīd was already allowed. When Mu'āwīya became Khalīf, he purposed retrenching the poet's stipend, but Lebīd reminded him that he was not likely to live much longer: Mu'āwīya's heart was touched, and he despatched the poet's allowance in full, but Lebīd died before it reached Kūfa.

Lebīd's last words, remarks Dr. Carlyle, breathe more of the spirit of a wit than that of a devotee: "I am going to enjoy the novelty of death; but it is a novelty by no means agreeable."

'A N T A R A

the son of Shaddād,* the renowned warrior and poet, of the tribe of 'Abs, was born in the beginning of the sixth century. His mother was an Abyssinian slave, captured in a predatory incursion; and for many

* So this poet is generally styled by Oriental writers; and according to Sir W. Jones' "Genealogy of the Seven Arabian Poets" (prefixed to his translation of the *Mu'allaqāt* in this volume), 'Antara was the son of Shaddād, the son of Mu'āwīya; but Professor Palmer and other modern authorities reverse this order of descent, and make Mu'āwīya the father of 'Antara, and Shaddād his grandfather.

years his father refused to recognise him as his son, until, by his heroic achievements, he had rendered himself worthy of that honour. 'Antara is invariably described as being of a very dark complexion, and having his lower-lip cloven.

The tents of 'Abs having been suddenly attacked and plundered, the father of 'Antara promised him his freedom if he rescued the women who had been taken captive, a feat which the hero accomplished, after slaying many of the enemy single-handed. From this time 'Antara was recognised as the champion of his tribe; yet envious spirits did not scruple frequently to taunt him with his base birth. One of these having insultingly called his mother a negress, the hero retorted: "If it were a question of mutual help, neither thou, nor thy father, nor thy grandfather, would ever be invited to a feast; for thou wouldst never be placed at the head of those that make gains [*i.e.*, spoils]." And when Qays son of Zuhayr said that the victory they had gained over an enemy was owing to the son of a negress, 'Antara replied, in verse: "One half of me is of the purest blood, the other half is my sword: therefore it is, that, when you are in trouble you call upon me to relieve you, rather than those who can reckon up a host of noble ancestors."

'Antara's heroic exploits and his excellent poetry, preserved by oral tradition, furnished material for the celebrated Romance of chivalry which purports to recount his life and adventures. Allowing for its

hyperbolical style (which never, in the opinion of Orientals, invalidates the truth of history), "the whole work," says Von Hammer, "may be esteemed as a faithful account of the principal tribes of the Arabs, particularly of the tribe of 'Abs, from which sprung 'Antara, in the time of Nushirvan, King of Persia."

The circumstance of 'Antara's death, as related by some authors—echoing the voice of tradition—though hardly so striking, is perhaps not less in accordance with the rules of poetical justice than that which concludes the Romance. It is said that, returning home with a herd of camels, of which he had robbed a clan of the tribe of Tā'i, 'Antara was struck with a spear, thrown at him by one of the plundered tribe, who had followed the party unseen, until a favourable opportunity offered for revenge. Mortally wounded, and now an old man, 'Antara had still sufficient strength left to ride home to his tribe, where he died soon after his arrival.

Muhammad was fascinated by the stories related of 'Antara's prowess and poetry: "I have never heard an Arab described," said the Prophet, "whom I should like to have seen so much as 'Antara."

'A M R

the son of Kulthūm, was a prince of the tribe of 'Arāqim (*i.e.*, "the speckled snake"), a branch of the Banū Taglib. His mother, Laylā, was the daughter of Muhalhīl and Hind; and at her birth, according to the barbarous custom of the pagan Arabs, Muhalhīl

gave order that she should be immediately buried alive. But hearing in his sleep a voice that told him his daughter should be the mother of heroes, he asked for the infant, and, finding that she was still alive, allowed her to be brought up. In course of time Laylà was married to Kulthūm, and shortly before 'Amr was born, she dreamed that a supernatural being assured her that her son should prove the bravest of warriors.

The tribes of Taglib and Bakr having been long at war, in consequence of the murder of Kulayb the son of Rabī'a, it was mutually agreed to terminate the feud by referring the dispute to the decision of 'Amr the son of Hind, king of Hira—the same who had so foully caused the murder of the poet Tarafa. 'Amr the son of Kulthūm appeared as the advocate of the Banū Taglib, and el-Hārith the son of Hilliza, on behalf of the Banū Bakr. The arguments employed by 'Amr on this occasion are contained in his Mu'allāqa; and his boastful—even minatory—declamation was little calculated to please the royal arbiter. The King of Hira gave judgment in favour of the Banū Bakr, and not long afterwards he was slain by 'Amr the son of Kulthūm—in revenge, as some think, for the murder of Tarafa; but others allege, perhaps with more reason, in retaliation for the judgment he had pronounced against the tribe of Taglib.

The circumstances of the King's death are thus related. The King having asked some one, "Do
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you know an Arab whose mother would refuse to serve my mother?" the reply was: "Only Laylā, the mother of 'Amr son of Kulthūm; for her father and uncle were the most honoured among the Arabs." Piqued at this reply, the king sent a messenger to the poet, desiring him and his mother to visit at his court. 'Amr set out, with his mother in a litter, and accompanied by a troop of horsemen. The king had erected a pavilion between Hīra and the Euphrates, and there, with his mother Hind, he awaited the arrival of the poet and his mother Laylā. When the latter entered the royal pavilion, Hind desired Laylā to reach her the keys, who boldly replied: "Let them rise and do thy bidding whom such service befits." At this refusal, Hind began to insult Laylā, and even to use violence against her, which 'Amr the son of Kulthūm seeing, his wrath knew no bounds; and, seizing the only sword (the King's) that hung upon the wall, he smote King 'Amr on the head and killed him.

Besides his Mu'allāqa, 'Amr the son of Kulthūm composed a number of bitter satires upon King Nu'mān of Hīra and his mother, who was the daughter of a goldsmith.

'Amr is reported to have attained the great age of a hundred, and to his descendants, gathered round his death-bed, he thus spoke: "I have lived longer than my forefathers, and I am now going to join them. Hear, then, the counsel of my experiences. Each time I blamed another, I was the object

of well-founded or ill-founded blame. He who attacks will be attacked: guard, therefore, against offending any one. Be benevolent and hospitable towards your friends: thus you will gain their esteem. It is better to refuse a request, than to promise and break your word. When a man speaks to you, listen to him attentively: when you speak, be brief; for long speeches are not free of folly. The bravest warrior is he that returns to the attack; and the best death is that on the battle-field."

EL-HARITH

the son of Hilliza,* when over a hundred years old, but still comparatively vigorous, was sent to the court of 'Amr son of Hind, King of Hīra, to represent the tribe of Bakr when the dispute between them and the Banū Taglib was submitted to that prince as arbiter. His Mu'allāqa contains the arguments he made use of on that occasion in behalf of his tribe; and such was the effect of his reasoning, his eloquence, and skilful praise of the prince of Hīra, that the royal arbiter decided in favour of the Banū Bakr; and, as a mark of special honour to the poet, the prince cast off the seven veils in which he was enveloped during the recitations of the rival-chiefs, and caused Harith to sit beside him. For this decision there is reason to believe the King soon afterwards lost his life at the

* According to Sir W. Jones' "Genealogy of the Seven Arabian Poets." D'Herbelot (*Bibliothèque Orientale*) says that he was "either el-Harith son of 'Amr, or 'Amr son of el-Harith."

hand of 'Amr son of Kulthūm, as has been already mentioned.*

It has been said of translation in general that "the wrong side of tapestry will represent more truly the figures on the right, notwithstanding the floss that blurs them, than the best version the beauties of the original." This remark would seem to apply with special force to English translations of early Arabic

* The order in which the several poems of the *Mu'allafat* are placed seems purely arbitrary; since they are not arranged either according to merit, date, length, or the rank of the authors. In the order of poetical merit, doubtless the Qasida of Imra'u-l-Qays would still retain the first place; that of Lebīd would come next, followed by 'Antara, Tarafa, and Zuhayr; and 'Amr, and el-Hārith, whose compositions are political declamations rather than eclogues, would occupy, as they do at present, the last places in the poetical Pleiades. If they were arranged in chronological order, they would probably stand thus: Tarafa; el-Harīth; 'Amr; 'Antara; Imra'u-l-Qays; Zuhayr; Lebīd. In the order of length: 'Amr, whose poem contains 108 verses; Tarafa, 103; Lebīd, 89; el-Harīth, 85; 'Antara, 81; Imra'u-l-Qays, 75; and Zuhayr, 64 verses. According to social rank, Imra'u-l-Qays again would take precedence of the others, while 'Antara would occupy the last place, as being the son of a slave-woman. Between these two extremes—Imra'u-l-Qays, the prince, and Antara, the son of a slave—would stand the five others, of whom at least four were connected with the court of Hīra, where the great poets of Arabia assembled in the century before the time of Muhammad.—In some editions of the "Seven Poets" the poems of en-Nabiga of Dubyān and el-'Asha take the places of those of 'Amr and el-Hārith.

poetry, of which *indistinctness* is said to be the very essence. "The language," says Burton, "'like a faithful wife, following the mind, and giving birth to its offspring,' and free from that 'luggage of particles' which clogs our modern tongues, leaves a mysterious vagueness between the relation of word to word, which materially assists the sentiment, not sense, of the poem. When verbs and nouns have—each one—many different significations, only the radical or general idea suggests itself. Rich and varied synonyms, illustrating the finest shades of meaning, are artfully used: now scattered to strike us by distinctness; now to form, as it were, a star, about which dimly seen satellites revolve." Yet even in an English translation the more striking beauties of the MU'ALLAQĀT are not altogether lost.

The Poem of IMRA'U'-L-QAYS is the most picturesque—even dramatic—of the whole seven: it presents a series of scenes of desert life, graphic, yet without the least attempt at detail: rapidly sketched, like the cartoons of a great artist, yet full of colour and *vraisemblance*, like finished pictures. We see the poet at supper in the sandhills, with the maidens whom he had surprised at their primitive bath; and while they all ply the leathern bottle of generous wine, we fancy we can hear their merry laughter at the jests of the wild young prince. We follow the bold youth at midnight, as he threads his way—not without a beating heart—among the tents of a hostile tribe, to the dwelling of the maiden for whose sake he thus

carries his life in his hand: we see the expectant damsel (for evidently the visit was pre-arranged) peeping timidly from the opening of her tent: we see them stealing softly away together, while she "draws over their footsteps the train of her pictured robe."—A weird journey through the desert on a gloomy night, when the darkness seems to enfold the solitary wayfarer as with a garment, and he starts ever and anon at the gaunt bones of camels and their riders that have been bleached on the sands by the noontide sun.—An exciting chase of the wild cow—a primitive feast on the game—a thunderstorm.

TARAFÄ is the only one of the Seven Poets who compares camels to ships. In his opening verses, the camels that bore away his beloved are likened to "ships sailing from Aduli"; and in verse 28, he says that the neck of his own camel "resembles the stern of a ship floating high on the billowy Tigris." Nearly one third of the poem is taken up with what Sir W. Jones terms "a long and no very pleasing description" of the poet's camel; yet we must suppose this minute detail of the points of an animal so indispensable to desert life in Arabia to have been very highly appreciated by the poet's countrymen; and the reader is recompensed for his patience by the fine simile with which it concludes: "She floats proudly along with her flowing tail, as the dancing-girl floats at the banquet of her lord, and spreads the long white skirts of her trailing robe"—a simile which suggests a pleasing image to the reader's mind. After

the long panegyric on his camel, the poet proceeds to speak of his own prowess in battle; then to hint at his pleasant way of life, in company of gay youths like himself, and beautiful singing-girls; followed by a series of Horatian maxims: life is brief—therefore let me enjoy the fleeting moments—let me drink my full draught of wine to-day, come what may to-morrow. Once more he refers to his warlike performances, armed with a scimitar which is no mere pruning-hook, but the genuine brother of confidence—one stroke of which renders a second needless. He concludes with a sagacious observation, which Muhammad said was prophetic of his own great mission: “Time will produce events of which thou canst have no idea; and he to whom thou gavest no commission will bring thee unexpected news.”*

Bold metaphor is a marked characteristic of the Poem of ZUHAYR—that of War as a foul monster, the mother of twin-born Famine and Desolation, being particularly striking and apposite: not less so perhaps is the poet’s description of the contending parties in the fierce and protracted War of Dāhis, under the figure of camels driven out to pasture on noxious weeds and to drink from foul and loathsome pools. The maxims tagged to the Poem, for the most part,

* A “dark” saying, which seems a parallel to that of Agatho, who remarks that “it is extremely probable that the most improbable things will occur”; as well as to the favourite saying of Lord Beaconsfield, that “it is always the unexpected that happens.”

express sentiments such as must occur to all thoughtful minds, matured by time and observation of life.*

The elegiac verses with which *LEBĪD*'s Poem opens, by their natural and unembellished touches of pathos, must, even in an English translation, come home to every feeling heart. Six of the *Mu'allāqa* Poems commence with the conventional lament for the departure of a mistress, but this elegy of *Lebīd* excels them all, for beauty of imagery and tenderness of expression—contrasting agreeably with the artificial eclogues of some modern European poets, whose aim has been rather to dazzle by contrast of words and brilliancy of diction than to reach the heart by natural thoughts conveyed in natural language. His camel the poet compares to a wild he-ass, hastening with his mate from the hills after the winter is past; and to a wild cow chased by the hunters. Like the Scottish poet Burns, whose large heart welled-up in sympathy for all natural objects—a crushed daisy—a ruined field mouse—little birds on a winter's night—like all true poets, the old Arabian bard could feel pity for the wild cow who had lost her young one, and who passed the night in agony, roaming restlessly to and fro, while the rain fell continuously upon her back. There is no such humane feeling as this

* Verse 62, for instance, offers a parallel to the well-known Greek epigram of P'alladius, which has been thus rendered into English verse :

A blockhead as long as he is silent is wise ;
For his talk is a sore he should hide from all eyes.

expressed in any of the other Poems, unless indeed it be in that of 'Antara, who seems to have pitied his wounded steed, who, he says, upbraided him with his eyes, and would have spoken if he could. Bright sketches of Arab life are furnished in this masterpiece of early poetry: outlines, but boldly and clearly defined, of which the reader is left to fill in the details from his own imagination. We see the poet, chief among his gay companions at the tavern, drinking rich wine long hoarded in leathern bottles, while the nimble fingers of the fair lutanist skilfully touch the strings of her instrument. We find him superintending the gaming, with headless and featherless arrows, for camels, which the poet himself generously provides as the prizes. We see him rise early in the morning and mount his horse, to defend his tribe against invaders. And at the opening of his tent we behold crowds of the poor and the needy—the widow and the fatherless—all partaking largely of his bounty.

The Poem of 'ANTARA is a curious medley of gentle pastoral utterances and fierce breathings of slaughter and revenge. The passage (vv. 14 to 19) in which the poet compares the mouth of his beloved to a fragrant bower, which the gentle rains have kept in perennial verdure, is perhaps finer than anything in the other six Poems. Interesting glimpses of Arab life are afforded us in this mosaic of poetical fragments: the breaking up of a family-camp in the desert at night—the camels, laden and

bridled, grazing on khimkhim grains; young ostriches flocking round the parent male bird, like a herd of black camels of Yemen assembling at the call of their keeper: the poet-hero quaffing old wine, bought with shining coin—frequently replenishing his crystal goblet from a well-stoppered jug: a stolen interview with a beautiful damsel of a hostile tribe: protracted and fierce single combats with the most renowned warriors.

The Poem of 'AMR the son of Kulthūm is the only Mu'allāqa which does not begin with an address to a real or imaginary mistress. 'Amr calls loudly for his morning draught of wine in a capacious goblet, and goes on to praise the magical influence of the generous beverage in causing the miser to forget for a time his golden hoard, and in diverting even the lover from his passion. Nevertheless the inevitable departure of his mistress is referred to, and her charms very minutely described, in the tenth to the twenty-second verses. The rest of his Poem consists of an arrogant panegyric on the Banū Taglib—their greatness and power, rich possessions and glorious achievements; and the beauty of their women, and the high estimation in which they were held by all their brave warriors.

Of a sober and staid cast, as befitted his venerable years, is the Poem of EL-HARITH, in reply to the intemperate harangue of his boastful opponent; yet he does not scruple to claim for his tribe all the virtues which should characterise a noble race.

"The range of thought in the early Arab poetry," remarks Sir William Muir,* "is of limited extent. Past experiences and the sentiment of the moment are described with illustrations drawn from pastoral life. The future is not thought of, nor is the attempt made to draw lessons from the past. Childlike, it is in the present that the Arab poet lives. . . The pastoral life is pictured in the simple imagery of undisturbed rural scenery. The cavalcade, bearing the whole worldly goods of the tribe—the matrons and maidens borne in litters on the camels' backs—passes along the desert with its scant and scattered foliage of hardy shrubs, and, after a weary march, encamps, it may be, in a vale where the springs break forth from the slope of an adjacent hill. The clustering tents darken the background, while the grateful fountain, with its green environs and its grove of date-trees, stands in delightful contrast to the wild bleak scenery around.† The maidens go forth with their pitchers to the spring; and the herds of goats return with full udders from the pasture, or still sweeter but scanty foliage of the stunted acacia-trees.

"Arab life lives, truly, a life of its own. There is no advancing civilization wherewith to rehabilitate

* In an excellent paper on "Ancient Arabic Poetry," published in the *Journal* of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1879.

† And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and three score and ten palm trees; and they encamped there by the waters.—Genesis xv. 27.

the surrounding imagery. The nearest approach in our own language to Arabian Poetry is the Book of Job, with its illustrations of the conies, the goats, and the wild ass ; and even such is still the life of the desert at the present day. Cut off from the world by wilderness and by nomad habits, the Arab maintains unchanged his simplicity, affected as little by the luxury and civilization of surrounding nations as by their politics. The eclogues of the classics are ever bordering upon urban life ; but here the freshness and freedom of the wild desert is untainted by the most distant approach of the busy world. The din of the city, even the murmur of the rural hamlet, is unheard. The poet is unconscious of their existence."

III.—GENUINENESS OF THE EARLY ARABIC POETRY.



LIKE the *ILIAD* of Homer, which was formed from the songs of the Rhapsodists, the *Qasidas* of the *MU'ALLAQĀT* are not regular compositions, but consist of short effusions and fragments strung together. But there is this difference, remarks Von Hammer-Purgstall, that "the authorship of the old Arab Prize Poems has been undisputed ; and no Arabian wolf has torn the *MU'ALLAQĀT*, like the *ILIAD*, and thrown

the fragments to various authors." This "difference," however, no longer exists; for, while the authenticity of the MU'ALLAQĀT as a whole is still allowed, the genuineness of certain passages is questioned by distinguished German scholars. And if we consider that the songs of the pre-Islāmite Arabs, like the Scottish Border Ballads, were preserved for many generations by oral tradition alone (for the art of writing, although known among the tribes of Arabia, was but little used), it will appear more than probable that interpolations exist in the early Arabic poetry. When the collectors, about the end of the seventh century, began to commit the songs of the old Arabs to writing, they found only fragments—but very numerous fragments—remaining among the desert tribes; and they were exposed to very much the same kind of errors and even frauds as were our own literary antiquaries when they went about the pastoral districts gathering fragments of traditionary ballads from the lips of "oldest inhabitants": verses of one particular song found their way into another; and artful rhymesters, who had a fatal knack of imitating the external form and language of the old Border Ballads, occasionally imposed upon enthusiastic and all too credulous collectors of legendary ballad lore. In like manner, it would seem that the collectors of early Arab poetry were sometimes the dupes of knavish Rāwīs, or Reciters, many of whom were themselves no mean poets, but could extemporaneously compose verses

so like in style and sentiment to the genuine old poetry as to render detection almost impossible. Nor are the collectors even above suspicion of helping out the sense of an obscure fragment by interweaving, here and there, a verse or two of their own composition.

Professor Ahlwardt, Herr Von Kremer, and other eminent German Orientalists have of late years subjected the reliques of ancient Arabic poetry to a thorough critical examination, with the object of separating the spurious from the genuine verses. The sudden transition from one subject to another, so common in the longer *qasidas*, furnished most favourable opportunities for interpolation. To distinguish such interpolated passages must necessarily be a work of no small difficulty; and very frequently the student can only detect errors and inaccuracies by finding the rules of *Qasīda* composition violated. For instance, only the hemistichs of the opening *bayt*, or couplet, should rhyme with each other; and if two or more such couplets are found in the same poem, they must be interpolations, or opening verses of other poems. Again, it is the rule, with very few exceptions (for which there are always obvious reasons), that a *Qasīda* begin with an address to a mistress—lamenting her departure, generally; and where this is wanting the poem is incomplete, if not altogether spurious. But errors of this kind must be obvious to every student, and require no great critical acumen for their discovery.

A much more difficult task is, the recognition and separation of verses which have been ingeniously composed and inserted by the Reciters, or even by the collectors, in order to connect fragments together. It is not easy to bring to the investigation of such a subject as this a mind perfectly unprejudiced. If the student brings to his task a pre-conceived notion of what the old Arabs would (or should) say about certain things, and finds in the poetry sentiments which go against his theory, he is prone to consider them as interpolations; and thus, consciously or unconsciously, the critic, in the process of investigation, will be more disposed to establish his theory than to elicit the truth. But the learned Orientalists who are engaged in sifting the early Arab poetry are certainly actuated by no such narrow motives; and the importance of the work they have undertaken can hardly be over-rated; since, without being assured of the genuineness of the pre-Islāmite poetical remains, accurate knowledge of the old Arabs themselves is impossible. Nevertheless, some of the conclusions at which they have arrived have been questioned by other scholars.

We are told that the collectors and critics were led by a strong religious sentiment to eliminate from the early poetry all allusions to pagan customs and false deities; yet in two of the Seven Prize Poems references to pagan superstitions still remain. Lebīd, in verse 76 of his Poem, alludes to the "camel doomed to die at her master's tomb"; and 'Antara, verse 70,

refers to the pagan superstition of "birds of the brain," a belief strictly forbidden by the Qur'ān.* In the *Romance of 'Antar*, said to have been composed in the 8th century, allusions to pagan deities and idolatrous customs of the old Arabs are very frequent; but perhaps the "strong religious sentiment" had evaporated on the introduction of profane science into Islām. However, if the collectors were imbued with so fervent a religious spirit as to eliminate references to idolatry from the early poetry, it seems strange that they should have allowed the numerous allusions to wine-drinking to remain: for the frequent mention of wine in modern Oriental poetry is to be explained by its mystical meaning.

But the same pious critics, who so carefully eliminated from the poetry all reference to pagan superstitions, substituted, it is said, sentiments in consonance with the doctrines of the Qur'ān. This, it is well known, was done by the authors of the *Thousand and One Nights*, in the case of Tales

* In verse 57 of his Mu'allaqa, Imra'u'l-Qays, according to Sir W. Jones' translation, alludes to idolatrous rites: "virgins, in black trailing robes, who dance round [the idol] Dewaa"; but this rendering seems to be erroneous. The original—

*fa 'anna la nà sirbun, ka-anna nū'āja hu
'adhūrā dawārin fī melā'in mudhayyali*

is thus translated by Mr. J. W. Redhouse:

"Then there appeared unto us a herd [of wild oxen], the heifers whereof [from their tails] were, as it were, maidens of Dawār in long-trained mantles."

derived from Hindū sources ; but it does not follow that the native poetry of the old Arabs was treated after the same manner. Herr Von Kremer takes exception to verses 27 and 28 of Zuhayr's Mu'allāqa, in which mention is distinctly made of the omniscience of GOD and of the Book of Reckoning, as being alier from the spirit of the old poetry. The same objection, if just, would also apply to verses 85 and 86 of Lebīd, where the dispensations of Providence are recognised, and to verse 25 of Imra'u'l-Qays, and verse 81 of Tarafa, where the Creator is plainly mentioned. But, besides their numerous false deities—for which the Arabs seem to have entertained but small reverence about the period when Muhammad began his great mission—there existed, more or less among the several tribes of the Peninsula a belief in ALLAH—the GOD. Indeed, as Mr. C. J. Lyall has very justly observed,* “without assuming such a fact as already well known to the people, a great portion of the Qur'ān would be impossible: that revelation is addressed to men who join other gods with GOD, not to those who deny Him;” and to bring them back to the worship of the one sole GOD—to concentrate their faith in Him alone—was the great object of the Prophet's mission.

That the remains of Ancient Arabic Poetry have been tampered with—altered and interpolated—by the grammarians, collectors, critics, and others,

* In the interesting and valuable Notes to his translation of Zuhayr's Mu'allāqa: *Journal of the Bengal Asiatic Society*, 187

now, however, proved most clearly : such is also the case with our own early traditionary poetry ; and human nature is essentially the same in Bussora and Kūfa, and in London and Edinburgh. But it is gratifying to know, on the authority of so learned, acute, and painstaking a scholar as Professor Ahlwardt, that, while much of the so-called Ancient Arabic Poetry is decidedly spurious, and not a little doubtful, there still remains much that is the genuine offspring of the untutored but brilliant and vigorous genius of the pre-Islamite bards.

IV.—ARABIAN LITERATURE UNDER THE KHALIFATE.



URING most part of the first century after the rise of Islām, the successors of Muhammad were too much engrossed in extending their dominions to bestow any patronage on science and literature. The standard of pure Arabic had been early fixed by the grammarians of Bussora and Kūfa, who, for this purpose only, collected fragments of the pre-Islāmite poetry that still lived in the hearts of the people of Yaman and Hijāz ; but under the dynasty of ‘Umayya, Arabian literature was confined to commentaries on the Qur’ān and poetry in the native language. “But,” says Abū-’l-Farai, “when God called the family of

Hāshim [*i.e.*, the house of ‘Abbas] to the government, and surrendered to them the command, the hearts returned from their indolence, the minds awoke from their torpor.” Under the patronage of El-Mansūr, the second Khalif of the house of ‘Abbas, the study of profane science was begun, and his zeal for the advancement of learning was imitated by his successors. Indeed it is usually said that Arabian literature arose, as well as flourished and decayed, with this dynasty, which continued from A.D. 749 till 1258. The literary treasures of Ancient Persia that had escaped destruction at the hands of the early Muslim conquerors were now even more esteemed than they were formerly despised. It was during the reign of El-Mansūr (A. D. 754-775) that the Pahlavī version of the celebrated Hindū Fables of Vishnūsarman was translated into Arabic, under the title of *Kalīla wa Dimna*—a work which has since been rendered into more languages than any book extant, with the sole exception of the Bible. In the same century, El-Asmā‘ī, the famous philologist and poet, wrote the great chivalric romance of ‘*Antar*. Early in the ninth century, El-Ma‘mūn, the seventh Khalif of the family of ‘Abbas, founded academies at Bagdad, Bussora, Kūfa, and Bukhārā, and caused the writings of Aristotle, Hippocrates, Galen, Dioscorides, Theophrastus, Euclid, Archimedes, and Ptolemy to be translated into Arabic. “He was not ignorant,” remarks Abū-l-Faraj, “that they are the elect of GOD—His best and most useful

servants—whose lives are devoted to the improvement of their rational faculties. . . The teachers of wisdom are the true luminaries and legislators of a world which without their aid would again sink into ignorance and barbarism.” About this period also were erected at Bagdad and Damascus observatories for the study of astronomy. And a generous vazir built, at the cost of 200,000 pieces of gold, a magnificent college at Bagdad, and endowed it with a yearly income of 15,000 dinars. At this establishment, it is said, several thousands of students, from the sons of noblemen to the sons of mechanics, were at the same time instructed in all the learning of the age; the professors were in the receipt of adequate stipends, and ample provision was made for indigent students.

From Samarkand and Bukhārā to Fez and Cordova, the entire Muslim empire was full of song: intellectual life was healthy and vigorous. Poetry, although it had lost the freshness of the desert, now took a wider range, and, no longer dwelling solely in the present, became reflective, and ultimately philosophical.* The

* The sentiments expressed in the Arabian didactic poetry are always just; being based on an intimate acquaintance with human nature, and an accurate observation of the course of life. The subjects are necessarily those which have formed the chief themes of moralists from Solomon downwards: they “lament the deceitfulness of hope, the fugacity of pleasure, and the frequency of calamity; and for palliatives of these innumerable miseries they recommend kindness, temperance, and

courts of the Khalifs at Bagdad were adorned with a brilliant constellation of men of learning and genius, drawn thither from all parts of the world. Nor were these princes merely the liberal and enlightened patrons of science and literature : many were themselves poets of very considerable genius, and proficient in the theory and practice of music. The descendants of the fanatics who ruthlessly destroyed the famous library at Alexandria, and all but annihilated the ancient literature of Persia, became, during the Dark Ages of European history, the zealous and intelligent conservators of the remains of the learning of antiquity. And at a period when a single copy of the Bible was valued at a sum equivalent to the cost of building an ordinary church, and when many of the Christian priests of Europe mumbled over masses which they could not understand, the library of the Muslim Kings of Spain contained 600,000 volumes, and there were 70 public libraries in the cities of Andalusia ; while the library of the Egyptian Sultans comprised 100,000 manu-

fortitude." But these familiar lessons of life have an additional force when they are accompanied, as in many of the Arabian poems, by illustrations which attract by their novelty, and interest and impress the heart by their beauty and appositeness.—Not less striking are the similitudes employed in the lighter effusions ; as, for example, the comparison of the blue eyes of a beautiful woman weeping to violets dropping dew ; or of wine, before it is mixed, to the cheek of a mistress, and, after the water is added, to the paleness of a lover.

scripts, beautifully transcribed and elegantly bound, which were freely lent to the scholars of Cairo.*

The false sciences of astrology and alchemy, to which the Arabians (and, in imitation of them, European dreamers) were so long ardently devoted—fondly hoping, by means of the first, to read the secrets of futurity in the movements of the planets, and, by the latter, to discover the arts of transmuting the baser metals into pure gold and of indefinitely prolonging life—these, it is well known, led to most important discoveries, and finally to the exact sciences of astronomy and chemistry.

To the descendants of the enlightened Muslims who settled in Spain early in the eighth century are Europeans indebted for not a few useful arts and appliances of daily life; among others, for the art of making paper from cotton, which rendered practicable the noble art of printing—the cheap multiplication of books. And the Arabic decimal system of numerical notation (for which the Arabians themselves were indebted to the Hindūs) was introduced into Europe by Gilbert of Aurillac, afterwards Pope

*Yet such was the extreme scarcity of books in England at a later period, that a manuscript, dated 1250, which is still preserved, containing the Proverbs of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, and Wisdom (one of the books of the Apocrypha), bears the following inscription: "This book belongs to the monastery of Rochester; given by the prior John. If any remove it, or conceal it when taken away, or fraudulently efface this inscription, let him be anathema, Amen."

Sylvester II., who studied at the Muslim university of Cordova in the tenth century. It was moreover through Arabic versions in Spain that the attention of the schoolmen was first drawn to the writings of Aristotle.

But especially in European literature is the influence of the Arabians to be clearly traced. The Trouvères of northern France and their tuneful brethren the gay Troubadours of sunny Provence, whose genius kindled the torch of Italian literature, were largely indebted to the wondrous fictions and the brilliant poetry of the East for the groundwork of their *Fabliaux* and the fanciful allusions in their *Lays*. In short, the fascinating fictions of the Arabians had permeated the literature of Europe from a very early period; and the worthy ecclesiastic, who read to his congregation the "moral tales" of the *Gesta Romanorum*, little dreamt that he was repeating the ingenious inventions of the hated Muslims and of the despised race of Abraham;—for many of the stories in that famous mediæval collection are derived from Arabian and Talmudic sources.

It is usual for a sketch of Arabian literature to conclude somewhat in this manner: "On the fall of the Khalifate, A.H. 656 (A.D. 1258), literature rapidly declined in the East: it was still cultivated, however, under the rule of the Sultans of Egypt, but with indifferent success; and on the eruption of the Turks, the sun of Oriental learning was virtually

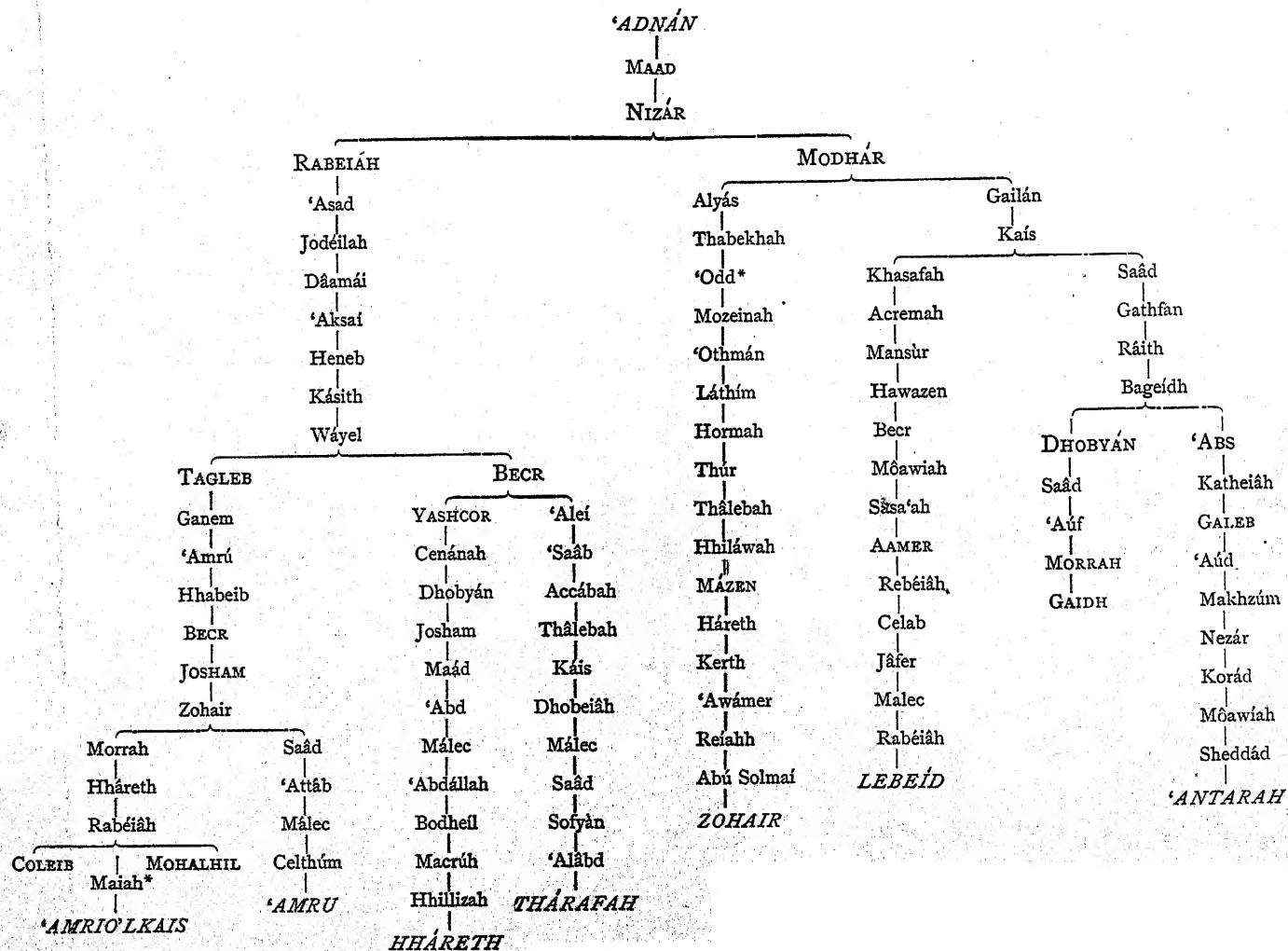
extinguished." But it is utterly false to say that Arabian literature was extinguished (or "irrecoverably blighted," as Dr. Carlyle expresses it) by the Turks. "Timūr and his successors in the East," writes Mr. Redhouse, the greatest living authority on this vast subject, "as the Osmanlis in the West, were patriotic enough to love their own beautiful language and to use it for all daily and literary purposes; but they patronised crowds of Persian poets and of Arabian grammarians, legists, &c. Arabic, being no longer dominant, had now only a share of attention, but this was a very large share—the scientific; as Persian had the ornamental, and Turkish the useful. Colleges innumerable were founded, for Arabic, in Turkey, in India, in Persia, in Russia—all by Turks. The *Softas* of Constantinople are all collegians, studying Arabic alone."

A popular English history of Arabian literature is a great desideratum. Germans have long had the rich stores of Arabic Poetry laid before them by the zeal and industry of Von Hammer-Purgstall and later scholars, among whom Ahlwardt, Von Kremer, and Rükert are pre-eminent. Yet England can at the present day boast of a trio not less distinguished for ripe scholarship, in Chenery, Palmer, and Wright: may we hope that these great Arabists will, at no distant date, open up for their unlearned countrymen the treasures of Arabian literature?

THIS Table is reprinted from the Genealogy prefixed to Sir W. Jones' translation of the MU'ALLAQĀT, as given in the tenth volume of the octavo edition of his works. The mode of transliterating Arabic proper names adopted by Sir W. Jones is different from most of the systems in use among modern English Arabists : the letter *Qāf* he represents by K, and *Kāf* by C ; '*Ayn*, for which there is no corresponding letter in our alphabet, and which is now generally represented by ['] or, when *Hamza* is not represented, by ['], he seems often to transliterate by *aa*, or *ā* ; and the strongly aspirated *Hā*, by *hh*.

It has been remarked, in the first section of the Introduction, that those Arabs who claim to be descended from Ishmael usually trace their genealogies no higher than 'Adnān, because of the uncertainty of the descents between 'Adnān and Ishmael. According to Sale, "the most approved series enumerates eight generations between these two persons, in the following order : ISMAEL, Kidār, Hamal, Nabet, Salāmān, al-Homeisa, al-Yasá, Odad, Odd, ADNAN."

THE GENEALOGY OF THE SEVEN ARABIAN POETS.



THE
MOALLAKÁT,
OR
SEVEN ARABIAN POEMS
WHICH WERE SUSPENDED ON
THE TEMPLE AT MECCA.

TRANSLATED, WITH ARGUMENTS,
BY
SIR WILLIAM JONES.

The Poems entitled Almoällakât exhibit an exact picture of their virtues and their vices, their wisdom and their folly; and show what may be constantly expected from men of open hearts and boiling passions, with no law to control, and little religion to restrain them.—SIR W. JONES : Discourse on The Arabs.



THE
P O E M
OF
A M R I O L K A I S.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE Poet, after the manner of his countrymen, supposes himself attended on a journey by a company of friends ; and as they pass near a place where his mistress had lately dwelled, but from which her tribe was then removed, he desires them to stop awhile, that he might indulge the painful pleasure of weeping over the deserted remains of her tent. They comply with his request, but exhort him to show more strength of mind, and urge two topics of consolation, namely, that he had before been equally unhappy, and that he had enjoyed his full share of pleasures. Thus, by recollection of his past delight, his imagination is kindled, and his grief suspended.

He then gives his friends a lively account of his juvenile frolics, to one of which they had alluded. It seems he had been in love with a girl named Onaiza, and had in vain sought an occasion to declare his passion. One day, when her tribe

had struck their tents, and were changing their station, the women, as usual, came behind the rest, with the servants and baggage, in carriages fixed on the backs of camels. Amriolkais advanced slowly at a distance, and, when the men were out of sight had the pleasure of seeing Onaiza retire with a party of damsels to a rivulet or pool, called Daratjuljul, where they undressed themselves, and were bathing, when the lover appeared, dismounted from his camel, and sat upon their clothes, proclaiming aloud that whoever would redeem her dress must present herself naked before him.

They adjured, entreated, expostulated; but, when it grew late, they found themselves obliged to submit, and all of them recovered their clothes except Onaiza, who renewed her adjurations, and continued a long time in the water: at length she also performed the condition, and dressed herself. Some hours had passed, when the girls complained of cold and hunger. Amriolkais therefore instantly killed the young camel on which he had ridden, and having called the female attendants together, made a fire and roasted him. The afternoon was spent in gay conversation, not without a cheer ul cup, for he was provided with wine in a leathern bottle. But, when it was time to follow the tribe, the prince (for such was his rank) had neither camel nor horse; and Onaiza, after much importunity, consented to take him on her camel, before the carriage, while the other damsels divided among themselves the less agreeable burden of his arms and the furniture of his beast.

He next relates his courtship of Fatima, and his more dangerous amour with a girl of a tribe at war with his own, whose beauties he very minutely and luxuriantly delineates. From these love-tales he proceeds to the commendation of his own fortitude, when he was passing a desert in the darkest night; and the mention of the morning which succeeded leads him to a long description of his hunter, and of a chase in the forest, followed by a feast on the game which had been pierced by his javelins.

Here his narrative seems to be interrupted by a storm of lightning and violent rain,--he nobly describes the shower, and the torrent which it produced down all the adjacent mountains; and, his companions retiring to avoid the storm, the drama (for the poem has the form of a dramatic pastoral) ends abruptly

The metre is of the *first* species, called *long verse*, and consists of the *bacchius* or *amphibrachys*, followed by the first *epitrite*; or, in the fourth and eighth places of the distich, by the *double iambus*, the last syllable being considered as a long one: the regular form, taken from the second chapter of "Commentaries on Asiatic Poetry," is this:

"Amator | puellarum | miser sæ | pe fallitur
Ocellis | nigris, labiis | odoris, | nigris comis."

THE POEM OF AMRIOLKAIS.



TAY!—Let us weep at the remembrance of our beloved, *at the sight of the station where her tent was raised*, by the edge of yon bending sands between Dahul and Haumel,

2. “Tudam and Mikra ; *a station*, the marks of which are not wholly effaced, though the south wind and the north have woven the twisted sand.”

3. *Thus I spoke*, when my companions stopped their coursers by my side, and said : “Perish not through despair : only be patient.”

4. “A profusion of tears,” *answered I*, “is my sole relief ; but what avails it to shed them over the remains of a deserted mansion ?”

5. “Thy condition,” *they replied*, “is not more painful than when thou leftest Howaira, before thy present passion, and her neighbour Rebaba, *on the hills of Masel*.”

6. “Yes,” *I rejoined*, “when those two damsels departed, musk was diffused from their robes, as the eastern gale sheds the scent of clove-gillyflowers :

7. “Then gushed the tears from my eyes, through excess of regret, and flowed down my neck, till my sword-belt was drenched in the stream.”

8. "Yet hast thou passed many days in sweet converse with the fair: but none so sweet as the day which thou spentest by *the pool of Daratjuljul*."

9. On that day I killed my camel, to give the virgins a feast; and, oh! how strange was it that they should carry his trappings and furniture!

10. The damsels continued till evening helping one another to the roasted flesh, and to the delicate fat, like the fringe of white silk finely woven.

11. On that happy day I entered the carriage, the carriage of Onaiza, who said: "Wo to thee! thou wilt compel me to travel on foot."

12. She added (while the vehicle was bent aside with our weight), "O Amriolkais, descend, or my beast also will be killed!"

13. I answered: "Proceed, and loosen his rein; nor withhold from me the fruits of thy love, which again and again may be tasted with rapture.

14. "Many a fair one like thee—though not, *like thee*, a virgin—have I visited by night; and many a lovely mother have I diverted from the care of her yearling infant, adorned with amulets:

15. "When the suckling behind her cried, she turned round to him with half her body; but half of it, pressed beneath my embrace, was not turned from me."

16. Delightful, too, was the day when Fatima first rejected me on the summit of yon sand-hill, and took an oath, which she declared inviolable.

17. "O Fatima!" said I, "away with so much coyness; and if thou hadst resolved to abandon me, yet at last relent!

18. "If indeed my disposition and manners are unpleasing to thee, rend at once the mantle of my heart, that it may be detached from thy love.

19. "Art thou so haughty, because my passion for thee destroys me; and because whatever thou commandest my heart performs?

20. "*Thou weepest*; yet thy tears flow merely to wound my heart with the shafts of thine eyes—my heart, already broken to pieces and agonizing."

21. *Besides these*, with many a spotless virgin, whose tent had not yet been frequented, have I held soft dalliance at perfect leisure.

22. *To visit one of them*, I passed the guards of her bower, and a hostile tribe, who would have been eager to proclaim my death.

23. It was the hour when the Pleiads appeared in the firmament, like the folds of a silken sash variously decked with gems.

24. I approached: she stood *expecting me* by the curtain; and, *as if she was preparing* for sleep, had put off all her vesture but her night-dress.

25. She said: "By Him who created me," and gave me her lovely hand, "I am unable to refuse thee; for I perceive that the blindness of thy passion is not to be removed."

26. Then I rose with her ; and as we walked she drew over our footsteps the train of her pictured robe.

27. Soon as we had passed the habitations of her tribe, and come to the bosom of a vale, surrounded with hillocks of spiry sand,

28. I gently drew her towards me by her curled locks, and she softly inclined to my embrace ;— her waist was gracefully slender, but sweetly swelled the part encircled with ornaments of gold.

29. Delicate was her shape ; fair her skin ; and her body well proportioned : her bosom was as smooth as a mirror,

30. Or, like the pure egg of an ostrich, of a yellowish tint blended with white, and nourished by a stream of wholesome water not yet disturbed.

31. She turned aside, and displayed her soft cheek : she gave a timid glance with languishing eyes, like those of a roe in *the groves of Wegera* looking tenderly at her young.

32. Her neck was like that of a milk-white hind, but, when she raised it, exceeded not the justest symmetry ; nor was the neck of my beloved so unadorned.

33. Her long coal-black hair decorated her back, thick and diffused, like bunches of dates clustering on the palm-tree.

34. Her locks were elegantly turned above her head ; and the riband which bound them was lost in her tresses, part braided, part dishevelled.

35. She discovered a waist taper as a well-twisted cord ; and a leg both as white and as smooth as the stem of a young palm, or a fresh reed, bending over the rivulet.

36. When she sleeps at noon, her bed is besprinkled with musk : she puts on her robe of undress, but leaves the apron *to her handmaids*.

37. She dispenses gifts with small, delicate fingers, sweetly glowing at their tips, like the white and crimson worm of Dabia, or dentrifices made of esel-wood.

38. The brightness of her face illumines the veil of night, like the evening taper of a recluse hermit.

39. On a girl like her, a girl of a moderate height, between those who wear a frock and those who wear a gown, the most bashful man must look with an enamoured eye.

40. The blind passions of men for common objects of affection are soon dispersed ; but from the love of thee my heart cannot be released.

41. O how oft have I rejected the admonitions of a morose adviser, vehement in censuring my passion for thee ; nor have I been moved by his reproaches !

42. Often has the night drawn her skirts around me, like the billows of the ocean, to make trial of my fortitude in a variety of cares ;

43. And I said to her, when she seemed to extend her sides, to drag on her unwieldy length, and to advance slowly with her breast :

44. "Dispel thy gloom, O tedious night ! that the morn may rise ; although my sorrows are such, that the morning-light will not give more comfort than thy shades.

45. "O hideous night !—a night in which the stars are prevented from rising, as if they were bound to a solid cliff with strong cables !"

46. Often, too, have I risen at early dawn, while the birds were yet in their nests, and mounted a hunter with smooth short hair, of a full height, and so fleet as to make captive the beasts of the forest ;

47. Ready in turning, quick in pursuing, bold in advancing, firm in backing ; and performing the whole with the strength and swiftness of a vast rock which a torrent has pushed from its lofty base ;

48. A bright bay steed, from whose polished back the trappings slide, as drops of rain glide hastily down the slippery marble.

49. Even in his weakest state he seems to boil while he runs ; and the sound which he makes in his rage is like that of a bubbling cauldron.

50. When other horses that swim through the air are languid and kick the dust, he rushes on like a flood, and strikes the hard earth with a firm hoof.

51. He makes the light youth slide from his seat, and violently shakes the skirts of a heavier and more stubborn rider ;

52. Rapid as the pierced wood in the hands of a playful child, which he whirls quickly round with a well-fastened cord.

53. He has the loins of an antelope, and the thighs of an ostrich ; he trots like a wolf, and gallops like a young fox.

54. Firm are his haunches ; and when his hinder parts are turned towards you, he fills the space between his legs with a long thick tail, which touches not the ground, and inclines not to either side.

55. His back, when he stands in his stall, resembles the smooth stone on which perfumes are mixed for a bride, or the seeds of coloquinteda are bruised.

56. The blood of the swift game, which remains on his neck, is like the crimson juice of hinna on gray flowing locks.

57. He bears us speedily to a herd of wild cattle, in which the heifers are fair as the virgins in black trailing robes, who dance round *the idol* Dewaar :

58. They turn their backs, and appear like the variegated shells of Yemen on the neck of a youth distinguished in his tribe for a multitude of noble kinsmen.

59. He soon brings us up to the foremost of the beasts, and leaves the rest far behind ; nor has the herd time to disperse itself.

60. He runs from wild bulls to wild heifers, and overpowers them in a single heat, without being bathed, or even moistened, with sweat.

61. Then the busy cook dresses the game, roasting part, baking part on hot stones, and quickly boiling the rest in a vessel of iron.

62. In the evening we depart; and when the beholder's eye ascends to the head of my hunter, and then descends to his feet, it is unable at once to take in all his beauties.

63. His trappings and girths are still upon him: he stands erect before me, not yet loosed for pasture.

64. O friend, seest thou the lightning, whose flashes resemble the quick glance of two hands, amid clouds raised above clouds?

65. The fire of it gleams like the lamps of a hermit, when the oil poured on them shakes the cord by which they are suspended.

66. I sit gazing at it, while my companions stand between Daaridge and Odhaib; but far distant is the cloud on which my eyes are fixed.

67. Its right side seems to pour its rain on *the hills of Katan*, and its left on *the mountains of Sitaar and Yadbul*.

68. It continues to discharge its waters over Cotaifa till the rushing torrent lays prostrate the groves of canahbel-trees.

69. It passes over *mount Kenaan*, which it deluges in its course, and forces the wild goats to descend from every cliff.

70. On *mount Taima* it leaves not one trunk of a palm tree, nor a single edifice, which is not built with well-cemented stone.

71. *Mount Tebeir* stands in the heights of the flood, like a venerable chief wrapped in a striped mantle.

72. The summit of *Mogaimir*, covered with the rubbish which the torrent has rolled down, looks in the morning like the top of a spindle encircled with wool.

73. The cloud unloads its freight on the desert of *Ghabeit*, like a merchant of *Yemen* alighting with his bales of rich apparel.

74. The small birds of the valley warble at day-break, as if they had taken their early draught of generous wine mixed with spice.

75. The beasts of the wood, drowned in the floods of night, float, like the roots of wild onions, at the distant edge of the lake.





THE
POEM
OF
TARAF A.

THE ARGUMENT.

THIS Poem was occasioned by a little incident highly characteristic of pastoral manners. Tarafa and his brother Mabel jointly possessed a herd of camels, and had agreed to watch them alternately, each on his particular day, lest, as they were grazing, they should be driven off by a tribe with whom their own clan was at war. But our poet was so immersed in meditation, and so wedded to his muse, that he often neglected his charge, and was sharply reprov'd by his brother, who asked him, sarcastically, whether, if he lost the camels, they could be restored by his poetry. "You shall be convinced of it," answered Tarafa; and persisted so long in his negligence that the whole herd was actually seized by the Modarites.

This was more than he really expected; and he applied to all his friends for assistance in recovering the camels; among others, he solicited the help of his cousin Malec, who, instead of granting

it, took the opportunity of rebuking him with acrimony for his remissness in that instance, and for his general prodigality, libertinism, and spirit of contention ; telling him that he was a disgrace to his family, and had raised innumerable enemies.

The defence of a poet was likely to be best made in poetical language ; and Tarafa produced the following composition in vindication of his character and conduct, which he boldly justifies in every respect, and even claims praise for the very course of life which had exposed him to censure.

He glories in his passion for women, and begins, as usual, with lamenting the departure of his beloved Khaula (or, the "tender fawn"), whose beauty he describes in a very lively strain. It were to be wished that he had said more of his mistress, and less of his camel, of which he interweaves a very long, and no very pleasing, description.

The rest of the poem contains an *éloge* on his own fortitude, sprightliness, liberality, and valour, mixed with keen expostulations on the unkindness and ingratitude of Malec, and with all the common topics in favour of voluptuousness : he even triumphs on having slain and dressed one of his father's camels, and blames the old man for his churlishness and avarice.

It is a tradition preserved by Abu Obeida, that one of the chiefs, whom the poet compliments in the eighty-first couplet, made him a present of a hundred camels, and enabled him, as he had promised, to convince his brother that poetry could repair his loss.

The metre is the same with that used by Amriolkais.

THE POEM OF TARAFÄ.



THE mansion of Khaula is desolate, and the traces of it on the stony hills of Tahmed faintly shine, like the remains of blue figures painted on the back of a hand."

2. *While I spoke thus to myself*, my companions stopped their coursers by my side, and said, "Perish not through despair, but act with fortitude."

3. Ah, *said I*, the vehicles which bore away my fair one on the morning when the tribe of Malec departed, and their camels were traversing the banks of Deda, resembled large ships

4. Sailing from Aduli ; or vessels of *the merchant* Ibn Yamin, which the mariner now turns obliquely, and now steers in a direct course ;

5. Ships, which cleave the foaming waves with their prows, as a boy at his play divides with his hand the collected earth.

6. In that tribe was a lovely antelope, with black eyes, dark ruddy lips, and a beautiful neck, gracefully raised to crop the fresh berries of erac — a neck adorned with two strings of pearls and topazes.

7. She strays from her young, and feeds with the herd of roes in the tangled thicket, where she browses the edges of the wild fruit, and covers herself with a mantle of leaves.

8. She smiles, and displays her bright teeth, rising from their dark-coloured bases, like a privet-plant in full bloom, which pierces a bank of pure sand moistened with dew :

9. To her teeth the sun has imparted his brilliant water ; but not to the part where they grow, which is sprinkled with lead-ore, while the ivory remains unspotted.

10. Her face appears to be wrapped in a veil of sunbeams ; unblemished is her complexion, and her skin is without a wrinkle.

11. Such cares *as this*, whenever they oppress my soul, I dispel *by taking adventurous journeys* on a lean yet brisk camel, who runs with a quick pace both morning and evening ;

12. Sure-footed, firm, and thin as the planks of a bier ; whose course I hasten over long-trodden paths, variegated like a striped vest.

13. She rivals the swiftest camels, even of the noblest breed, and her hind-feet rapidly follow her fore-feet on the beaten way.

14. In the vernal season, she grazes on yon two hills among others of her race, whose teats are not yet filled with milk, and depastures the lawns, whose finest grass the gentle showers have made luxuriantly green.

15. She turns back at the sound of her rider's voice ; and repels the caresses of a thick-haired russet stallion with the lash of her bushy tail,

16. Which appears as if the two wings of a large white eagle were transfix'd by an awl to the bone, and hung waving round both her sides :

17. One while it lashes the place of him who rides hindmost on her ; another while it plays round her teats, which are become wrinkled and flaccid like a leathern bag, their milk no longer distending them.

18. Her two haunches are plump, and compact as the two smooth valves of a lofty castle-gate.

19. Supple is her backbone : her ribs are like the strongest bows ; and her neck is firmly raised on the well-connected vertebres.

20. The two cavities under her shoulders are spacious as two dens of beasts among the wild lotus plants ; and stiff bows appear to be bent under her sinewy loins.

21. Her two thighs are exceedingly strong, and, when she moves, they diverge like two buckets carried from a well in the hands of a robust drawer of water.

22. *Her joints are well knit, and her bones are solid,* like a bridge of Grecian architecture, whose builder had vowed that he would enclose it with well-cemented bricks.

23. The hair under her chin is of a reddish hue : her back is muscular : she takes long yet quick steps with her hind-feet, and moves her fore-feet with agility ;

24. She tosses them *from her chest* with the strength and swiftness of cables firmly pulled *by a nervous arm* ; and her shoulders are bent like the rafters of a lofty dome :

25. She turns rapidly from the path : exceedingly swift is her pace ; long is her head ; and her shoulder-bones are strongly united to her sides.

26. The white and hollow marks of the cords, with which her burdens have been tied to her back, resemble pools of water on the smooth brow of a solid rock ;

27. Marks which sometimes unite, and sometimes are distinct, like the gores of fine linen, which are sewed under the arms of a well-cut robe.

28. Long is her neck ; and when she raises it with celerity, it resembles the stern of a ship floating aloft on the billowy Tigris.

29. Her skull is firm as an anvil ; and the bones, which the sutures unite, are indented, and sharp as a file.

30. Her cheek is smooth and white as paper of Syria ; and her lips, as soft as dyed leather of Yemen, exactly and smoothly cut.

31. Her two eyes, like two polished mirrors, have found a hiding-place in the caverns of their orbits, the bones of which are like rocks, in whose cavities the water is collected :

32. Thou beholdest them free from blemish or spot, and resembling in beauty those of a wild-cow, the mother of playful young, when the voice of the hunter has filled her with fear.

33. Her ears truly distinguish every sound, to which she listens attentively in her nightly journeys, whether it be a gentle whisper or a loud noise ;

34. Sharp ears, by which the excellence of her breed is known !—ears like those of a solitary wild-bull in the groves of Haumel.

35. Her heart, easily susceptible of terror, palpitates with a quick motion, yet remains firm *in her chest* as a round solid stone striking a broad floor of marble.

36. If I please, she raises her head to the middle of her trappings, and swims with her fore-legs as swift as a young ostrich.

37. If I please, she moves more slowly ; if not, she gallops, through fear of the strong lash formed of twisted thongs.

38. Her upper-lip is divided, and the softer part of her nose is bored : when she bends them towards the ground her pace is greatly accelerated.

39. On a camel like this I continue my course, when the companion of my adventure exclaims : “ Oh, that I could redeem thee, and redeem myself from the impending danger ! ”

40. While his soul flutters through fear, and, imagining that he has lost the way, he supposes himself on the brink of perdition.

41. When the people say aloud : “ Who is the man to deliver us from calamity ? ” I believe they call upon me, and I disgrace not their commission by supineness or folly.

42. I shake the lash over my camel, and she quickens her pace, while the sultry vapour rolls in waves over the burning cliffs.

43. She floats proudly along with her flowing tail, as the dancing-girl floats in the banquet of her lord, and spreads the long white skirts of her trailing vest.

44. I inhabit not the lofty hills through fear of enemies or of guests ; but when the tribe or the traveler demand my assistance, I give it eagerly.

45. If you seek me in the circle of the assembled nation, there you find me ; and if you hunt me in the bowers of the vintner, there too you discover your game.

46. When you visit me in the morning, I offer you a flowing goblet ; and, if you make excuses, I bid you drink it with pleasure, and repeat your draught.

47. When all the clan are met to state their pretensions to nobility, you will perceive me raised to the summit of an illustrious house, the refuge of the distressed.

48. My companions in the feast are youths, bright as stars, and singing-girls, who advance towards us, clad in striped robes and saffron-coloured mantles :

49. Large is the opening of their vests above their delicate bosoms, through which the inflamed youth touches their uncovered breasts of exquisite softness.

50. When we say to one of them, "Let us hear *a song*," she steps before us with easy grace, and begins with gentle notes, in a voice not forced :

51.* When she warbles in a higher strain, you would believe her notes to be those of camels lamenting their lost young.

52. Thus I drink old wine, without ceasing, and enjoy the delights of life ; selling and dissipating my property, both newly acquired and inherited ;

53. Until the whole clan reject me, and leave me solitary, like a diseased camel smeared with pitch :

54. Yet even now I perceive that the sons of earth (*the most indigent men*) acknowledge my bounty, and the rich inhabitants of yon extended camp *confess my glory*.

55. Oh, thou, who censurest me for engaging in combats and pursuing pleasures, wilt thou, *if I avoid them*, insure my immortality ?

56. If thou art unable to repel the stroke of death, allow me, before it comes, to enjoy the good which I possess.

57. Were it not for three enjoyments which youth affords, I swear by thy prosperity, that I should not be solicitous how soon my friends visited me on my death-bed :

58. First, to rise before the censurers awake, and to drink tawny wine, which sparkles and froths when the clear stream is poured into it.

59. Next, when a warrior, encircled by foes, implores my aid, to bend towards him my prancing charger, fierce as a wolf among the gadha-trees, whom the sound of human steps has awakened, and who runs to quench his thirst at the brook.

60. Thirdly, to shorten a cloudy day, a day astonishingly dark, by toying with a lovely delicate girl under a tent supported by pillars,—

61. A girl, whose bracelets and garters seem hung on the stems of oshar-trees, or of ricinus, not stripped of their soft leaves.

62. Suffer me, whilst I live, to drench my head *with wine*, lest, having drunk too little in my life-time, *I should be thirsty in another state.*

63. A man of my generous spirit drinks his full draught to-day, and to-morrow, when we are dead, it will be known which of us has not quenched his thirst.

64. I see no difference between the tomb of an anxious miser, gasping over his hoard, and the tomb of the libertine, lost in the maze of voluptuousness.

65. You behold the sepulchres of them both raised in two heaps of earth, on which are elevated two broad piles of solid marble among the tombs closely connected.

66. Death, I observe, selects the noblest heroes for her victims, and reserves as her property the choicest possessions of the sordid hoarder.

67. I consider time as a treasure decreasing every night; and that which every day diminishes soon perishes for ever.

68. By thy life, my friend, when Death inflicts not her wound, she resembles a camel-driver who relaxes the cord which remains twisted in his hand.

69. What causes the variance, which I perceive, between me and my cousin Malec, who, whenever I approach him, retires and flees to a distance?

70. He censures me, whilst I know not the ground of his censure ; just as Karth, the son of Aabed, reproved me in the assembly of the tribe.

71. He bids me wholly despair of all the good which I seek, as if we had buried it in a gloomy grave ;

72. And this for no defamatory words which I have uttered, but only because I sought, without remissness, for the camels of my brother Mabed.

73. I have drawn closer the ties of our relation, and I swear by thy prosperity, that in all times of extreme distress, my succour is at hand.

74. Whenever I am summoned on momentous enterprises, I am prepared to encounter peril ; and whenever the foe assails thee impetuously, I defend thee with equal vehemence.

75. If any base defamers injure thy good name by their calumnies, I force them, without previous menace, to drain a cup from the pool of death ;

76. Yet, without having committed any offence, I am treated like the worst offender—am censured, insulted, upbraided, rejected.

77. When any other man *but* Malec my cousin, he would have dispelled my cares, or have left me at liberty for a season.

78. But my kinsman strangles me with cruelty, even at the very time when I am giving thanks for past, and requesting new favours ; even when I am seeking from him the redemption of my soul !

79. The unkindness of relations gives keener anguish to every noble breast than the stroke of an Indian scimitar.

80. Permit me then to follow the bent of my nature, and I will be grateful for thy indulgence, although my abode should be fixed at such a distance as the mountains of Darghed.

81. Had it pleased the Author of my being, I might have been as illustrious as Kais, the son of Khaled ; had it pleased my Creator, I might have been as eminent as Amru, the son of Morthed :

82. Then should I have abounded in wealth ; and the noblest chiefs would have visited me, as a chieftain equally noble.

83. I am light, as you know me all, and am nimble ; following my own inclinations, and briskly moving as the head of a serpent with flaming eyes.

84. I have sworn that my side should never cease to line a bright Indian blade with two well-polished and well-sharpened edges :

85. A penetrating scimitar ! When I advance with it in my defence against a fierce attack, the first stroke makes a second unnecessary : it is not a mere pruning-sickle,

86. But the genuine brother of confidence, not bent by the most impetuous blow ; and when they say to me, "Gently," I restrain its rage, and exclaim, "It is enough !"

87. When the whole clan are bracing on their armour with eager haste, thou mayst find me victorious in the conflict, as soon as my hand can touch the hilt of this scimitar.

88. Many a herd of slumbering camels have I approached with my drawn sabre, when the foremost of them, *awakening*, have fled through fear of me :

89. But one of them has passed before me, strong-limbed, full-breasted, and well-fed, the highly-valued property of a morose old churl, dry and thin as a fuller's club.

90. He said to me, when the camel's hoof and thigh were dismembered, "Seest thou not how great an injury thou hast done me?"

91. Then he turned to his attendants, saying, "What opinion do you form of that young wine-drinker, who assails us impetuously, whose violence is preconcerted?"

92. "Leave him," he added, "and let this camel be his perquisite ; but, unless you drive off the hindmost of the herd, he will reiterate his mischief."

93. Then our damsels were busy in dressing the camel's foal, and eagerly served up the luscious bunch.

94. O daughter of Mabel, sing my praises, if I am slain, according to my desert, and rend thy vest with sincere affliction !

95. Compare me not with any man, whose courage equals not my courage ; whose exploits are not like mine ; who has not been engaged in combats, in which I have been distinguished :

96. With a man slow in noble enterprises, but quick in base pursuits; dishonoured in the assembly of the tribe, and a vile outcast.

97. Had I been ignoble among my countrymen, the enmity of the befriended and the friendless might have been injurious to me;

98. But their malevolence is repelled by my firm defiance of them, by my boldness in attack, by my solid integrity, and my exalted birth.

99. By thy life, the hardest enterprises neither fill my day with solicitude, nor lengthen the duration of my night:

100. But many a day have I fixed my station immoveably in the close conflict, and defended a pass, regardless of hostile menaces,

101. On my native field of combat, where even the boldest hero might be apprehensive of destruction; where the muscles of our chargers quake, as soon as they mingle in battle;

102. And many an arrow *for drawing lots* have I seen well hardened and made yellow by fire, and then have delivered it into the hand of the gamester noted for ill fortune.

103. *Too much wisdom is folly*; for time will produce events, of which thou canst have no idea; and he, to whom thou gavest no commission, will bring thee unexpected news.



THE
POEM
OF
ZOH AIR.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE war of Dahis, of which Amriolkais is by some supposed to have been the cause, had raged near forty years, if the Arabian account be true, between the tribes of Abs and Dhobyen, who both began at length to be tired of so bloody and ruinous a contest. A treaty was therefore proposed and concluded; but Hosein, the son of Demdem, whose brother Harem had been slain by Ward, the son of Habes, had taken a solemn oath, not unusual among the Arabs, that he would not bathe his head in water, until he had avenged the death of his brother, by killing either Ward himself, or one of his nearest relations. His head was not long unbathed; and he is even supposed to have violated the law of hospitality by slaying a guest, whom he found to be an Absite descended lineally from the common ancestor Galeb.

This malignant and vindictive spirit gave great displeasure to Hareth and Harem, two virtuous chiefs of the same tribe with Hosein; and when the Absites were approaching in warlike

array to resent the infraction of the treaty, Hareth sent his own son to the tent of their chief with a present of a hundred fine camels, as an atonement for the murder of their countryman, and a message importing his firm reliance on their honour, and his hope that "they would prefer the milk of the camels to the blood of his son." Upon this Rabeiah, the pounce of Abs, having harangued his troops, and received their approbation, sent back the youth with this answer, that he "accepted the camels as an expiatory gift, and would supply the imperfection of the former treaty by a sincere and durable peace."

In commemoration of this noble act, Zohair, then a very old man, composed the following panegyric on Hareth and Harem ; but the opening of it, like all the others, is amatory and elegiac : it has also something of the dramatic form.

The poet, supposed to be travelling with a friend, recognises the place where the tent of his mistress had been pitched twenty years before ; he finds it wild and desolate ; but his imagination is so warmed by associated ideas of former happiness, that he seems to discern a company of damsels, with his favourite in the midst of them, of whose appearance and journey he gives a very lively picture ; and thence passes, rather abruptly, to the praises of the two peace-makers and their tribe ; inveighs against the malignity of Hosein ; personifies War, the miseries of which he describes in a strain highly figurative ; and concludes with a number of fine maxims, not unlike the proverbs of Solomon, which he repeats to his friend as a specimen of his wisdom acquired by long experience.

The measure is the same with that of the first and second Poems.

THE POEM OF ZOHAIR.



ARE these the only traces of the lovely Ommaufia? Are these the silent ruins of her mansion in the rough plains of Derraag and Mothatallem?

2. Are the remains of her abode, in the two stations of Rakma, become like blue stains renewed with fresh woad on the veins of the wrist?

3. There the wild cows with large eyes, and the milk-white deer, walk in slow succession, while their young rise hastily to follow them from every lair.

4. On this plain I stopped, after an absence of twenty summers, and with difficulty could recollect the mansion of my fair one after long meditation ;

5. *After surveying* the black stones on which her cauldrons used to be raised, and the canal round her tent, like the margin of a fish-pond, which time had not destroyed.

6. Soon as I recollected the dwelling-place of my beloved, I said to the remains of her bower,—
“Hail, sweet bower ! may thy morning be fair and auspicious !”

7. But, *I added*, look, my friend ! dost thou not discern a company of maidens seated on camels, and advancing over the high ground above *the streams of Jortham* ?

8. They leave on their right the mountains and rocky plains of Kenaan. Oh, how many of my bitter foes, and how many of my firm allies, does Kenaan contain !

9. They are mounted in carriages covered with costly awnings, and with rose-coloured veils, the linings of which have the hue of crimson andem-wood.

10. They now appear by the valley of Subaan, and now they pass through it : the trappings of all their camels are new and large.

11. When they ascend from the bosom of the vale, they sit forward on the saddle-cloths, with every mark of a voluptuous gaiety.

12. The locks of stained wool, that fall from their carriages whenever they alight, resemble the scarlet berries of night-shade not yet crushed.

13. They rose at day-break ; they proceeded at early dawn ; they are advancing towards the valley of Ras, *directly and surely*, as the hand to the mouth.

14. Now, when they have reached the brink of yon blue gushing rivulet, they fix the poles of their tents, like the Arab with a settled mansion.

15. Among them the nice gazer on beauty may find delight, and the curious observant eye may be gratified with charming objects.

16. *In this place*, how nobly did the two descendants of Gaidh, the son of Morra, labour to unite the tribes, which a fatal effusion of blood had long divided !

17. I have sworn by the sacred edifice, round which the sons of Koraish and Jorham, who built it, make devout processions ;

18. Yes, I have solemnly sworn, that I would give due praise to that illustrious pair, who have shown their excellence in all affairs, both simple and complicated.

19. *Noble chiefs!* You reconciled Abs and Dhobyān after their bloody conflicts : after the deadly perfumes of Minshām had long scattered poison among them.

20. You said : " We will secure the public good on a firm basis : whatever profusion of wealth or exertions of virtue it may demand, we *will* secure it."

21. Thence you raised a strong fabric of peace ; from which all partial obstinacy and all criminal supineness were alike removed.

22. Chiefs, exalted in the high ranks of Maad, *father of Arabs!* may you be led into the paths of felicity ! The man who opens for his country a treasure of glory should himself be glorified.

23. They drove to the tents of their appeased foes a herd of young camels, marked for the goodness of their breed, and either inherited from their fathers or the scattered prizes of war.

24. With a hundred camels they closed all wounds : in due season were they given, yet the givers were themselves free from guilt.

25. The atonement was auspiciously offered by one tribe to the other ; yet those who offered it had not shed a cupful of blood.

26. Oh, convey this message from me to the sons of Dhobyán, and say to the confederates : Have you not bound yourselves in this treaty by an indissoluble tie ?

27. Attempt not to conceal from God the designs which your bosoms contain ; for that which you strive to hide God perfectly knows.

28. He sometimes defers the punishment, but registers the crime in a volume, and reserves it for the day of account ; sometimes He accelerates the chastisement, and heavily it falls !

29. War is a dire fiend, as you have known by experience ; nor is this a new or a doubtful assertion concerning her.

30. When you expelled her from your plains, you expelled her covered with infamy ; but when you kindled her flame, she blazed and raged.

31. She ground you, as the mill grinds the corn with its lower stone ; like a female camel, she became pregnant : she bore twice in one year ; and at her last labour, she was the mother of twins :

32. She brought forth Distress and Ruin, monsters full-grown, each of them deformed as the dun camel of Aad ; she then gave them her breast, and they were instantly weaned.

33. Oh, what plenty she produced in your land !
The provisions which she supplied were more abundant, no doubt, than those which the cities of Irak dispense to their inhabitants, weighed with large weights, and measured with ample measures !

34. Hail, illustrious tribe ! They fix their tents where faithful allies defend their interests, whenever some cloudy night assails them with sudden adversity.

35. Hail, noble race ! among whom neither can the revengeful man wreak his vengeance, nor is the penitent offender left to the mercy of his foes.

36. Like camels were they turned loose to pasture between the times of watering ; and then were they led to copious pools, horrid with arms and blood :

37. They dragged one another to their several deaths ; and then were they brought back, like a herd, to graze on pernicious and noxious weeds.

38. I swore by my life, that I would exalt with praises that excellent tribe, whom Hosein, the son of Demdem, injured, when he refused to concur in the treaty.

39. He bent his whole mind to the accomplishment of his hidden purpose : he revealed it not ; he took no precipitate step.

40. He said, "I will accomplish my design ; and will secure myself from my foe with a thousand horses well caparisoned."

41. He made a fierce attack, nor feared the number of tents, where *Death*, the mother of vultures, had fixed her mansion ;

42. There the warrior stood armed at all points, fierce as a lion with strong muscles, with a flowing mane, with claws never blunted :

43. A bold lion, who, when he is assailed, speedily chastises the assailant ; and, when no one attacks him openly, often becomes the aggressor.

44. Yet I swear by thy life, *my friend*, that their lances poured not forth the blood of Ibn Neheic, nor of Mothalleh, cruelly slain ;

45. Their javelins had no share in drinking the blood of Naufel, nor that of Waheb, nor that of Ibn Mojaddem.

46. The deaths of all those chiefs I myself have seen expiated with camels free from blemish, ascending the summits of rocks.

47. He, indeed, who rejects the blunt end of the lance, *which is presented as a token of peace*, must yield to the sharpness of the point, with which every tall javelin is armed.

48. He who keeps his promise escapes blame ; and he who directs his heart to the calm resting-place of integrity will never stammer nor quake *in the assemblies of his nation*.

49. He who trembles at all possible causes of death falls in their way : even though he desire to mount the skies on a scaling-ladder.

50. He who possesses wealth or talents, and withholds them from his countrymen, alienates their love, and exposes himself to their obloquy.

51. He who continually debases his mind by suffering others to ride over it, and never raises it from so abject a state, will at last repent of his meanness.

52. He who sojourns in foreign countries mistakes his enemy for his friend ; and him, who exalts not his own soul, the nation will not exalt.

53. He who drives not invaders from his cistern with strong arms will see it demolished ; and he who abstains ever so much from injuring others will often himself be injured.

54. He who conciliates not the hearts of men in a variety of transactions will be bitten by their sharp teeth, and trampled on by their pasterns.

55. He who shields his reputation by generous deeds will augment it ; and he who guards not himself from censure will be censured.

56. I am weary of the hard burdens which life imposes ; and every man who, *like me*, has lived four-score years will assuredly be no less weary.

57. I have seen Death herself stumble like a dim-sighted camel ; but he whom she strikes falls ; and he whom she misses grows old, even to decrepitude.

58. Whenever a man has a peculiar cast in his nature, although he supposes it concealed, it will soon be known.

59. Experience has taught me the events of this day and yesterday ; but as to the events of to-morrow, I confess my blindness.

60.* Half of man is his tongue, and the other half is his heart : the rest is only an image composed of blood and flesh.

61.* He who confers benefits on persons unworthy of them changes his praise to blame, and his joy to repentance.

62.* How many men dost thou see whose abundant merit is admired, when they are silent, but whose failings are discovered, as soon as they open their lips !

63.* An old man never grows wise after his folly ; but when a youth has acted foolishly he may attain wisdom.

64.* We asked, and you gave ; we repeated our requests, and your gift also was repeated ; but whoever frequently solicits will at length meet with a refusal.





THE
P O E M
OF
L E B E I D.

THE ARGUMENT.

ALTHOUGH the opening of this Poem be that of a love-elegy, and the greater part of it be purely pastoral, yet it seems to have been composed on an occasion more exalted than the departure of a mistress, or the complaints of a lover. For the poet, who was also a genuine patriot, had been entertained at the court of Nomaan, King of Hira in Mesopotamia, and had been there engaged in a warm controversy with Rabeiah, son of Zeiad, chief of the Absites, concerning the comparative excellence of their tribes. Lebeid himself relates, what might be very naturally expected from a man of his eloquence and warmth, that he maintained the glory of his countrymen and his own dignity against all opponents; but, in order to perpetuate his victory, and to render his triumph more brilliant, he produced the following poem at the annual assembly, and having obtained the suffrages of the critics, was permitted, we are told, to hang it up on the gate of the Temple.

The fifteen first couplets are extremely picturesque, and highly characteristic of Arabian manners. They are followed by an expostulatory address of the poet himself, or of some friend who attended him on his rambles, on the folly of his fruitless passion

for Nawara, who had slighted him, and whose tent was removed to a considerable distance. Occasion is hence taken to interweave a long description of the camel on which he intended to travel far from the object of his love, and which he compares for swiftness to a cloud driven by the wind, or a wild-ass running to a pool, after having subsisted many months on herbage only ; or rather to a wild-cow hastening in search of her calf, whom the wolves had left mangled in the forest ;—the last comparison consists of *seventeen* couplets, and may be compared with the long-tailed similes of the Greek and Roman poets.

He then returns to Nawara, and requites her coyness with expressions of equal indifference ; he describes the gaiety of his life, and the pleasures which he can enjoy even in her absence ; he celebrates his own intrepidity in danger and firmness on his military station ; whence he takes occasion to introduce a short but lively description of his horse ; and, in the seventieth couplet, alludes to the before-mentioned contest, which gave rise to the poem : thence he passes to the praises of his own hospitality ; and concludes with a panegyric on the virtues of his tribe.

The measure is of the fifth class, called *perfect* verse, which regularly consists of the compound foot *benedicerent*, six times repeated, in this form :

“Tria grata sunt | animo meo, ut | melius nihil,
Oculi nigri, | cyathus nitens, | roseus calyx.”

But when the couplet admits the third epitrite, *pastoribus*, and the double iambus, *amantium*, it may be considered as belonging to the seventh, or *tremulous*, class ; between which and the *perfect* the only distinction seems to be that the *tremulous* never admits the *anapestic* foot. They are both, in the language of European prosody, *iambics*, in which the even places are invariably pure, and the odd places always exclude the dactyl : when the uneven feet are *trochees* or *pyrrhics*, the verses become *choriambic* or *peonic* ; but of this change we have no instance in the poem before us.

THE POEM OF LEBEID.



DESOLATE are the mansions of *the fair*,
the stations in Minia, where they rested,
and those where they fixed their abodes !
Wild are the hills of Goul, and deserted
is the summit of Rijaam.

2. The canals of Rayaam are destroyed: the
remains of them are laid bare and smoothed *by the
floods*, like characters engraved on the solid rocks.

3. Dear ruins ! Many a year has been closed,
many a month, holy and unhallowed, has elapsed,
since I exchanged tender vows with their fair in-
habitants !

4. The rainy constellations of spring have made
their hills green and luxuriant: the drops from the
thunder-clouds have drenched them with profuse as
well as with gentle showers :

5. *Showers*, from every nightly cloud, from every
cloud veiling the horizon at day-break, and from
every evening cloud, responsive with hoarse murmurs.

6. Here the wild eringo-plants raise their tops :
here the antelopes bring forth their young, by the
sides of the valley: and here the ostriches drop
their eggs.

7. The large-eyed wild-cows lie suckling their
young, a few days old—their young, who will soon
become a herd on the plain.

8. The torrents have cleared the rubbish, and disclosed the traces of habitations, as the reeds of a writer restore effaced letters in a book ;

9. Or as the black dust, sprinkled over the varied marks on a fair hand, brings to view with a brighter tint the blue stains of woad.

10. I stood asking news of the ruins concerning their lovely habitants ; but what avail my questions to dreary rocks, who answer them only by their echo ?

11. In the plains, which now are naked, a populous tribe once dwelled ; but they decamped at early dawn, and nothing of them remains, but the canals which encircled their tents, and the thumaam-plants, *with which they were repaired.*

12. How were thy tender affections raised, when the damsels of the tribe departed ; when they hid themselves in carriages of cotton, like antelopes in their lair ; and the tents, as they were struck, gave a piercing sound !

13. They were concealed in vehicles whose sides were well covered with awnings and carpets, with fine-spun curtains, and pictured veils :

14. A company of maidens were seated in them, *with black eyes and graceful motions*, like the wild heifers of Tudah, or the roes of Wegera tenderly gazing on their young.

15. They hastened their camels, till the sultry vapour gradually stole them from thy sight ; and they seemed to pass through a vale, wild with tamarisks and rough with large stones, like the valley of Beihsa.

16. Ah, what remains in thy remembrance of the beautiful Nawara, since now she dwells at a distance, and all the bonds of union between her and thee, both strong and weak, are torn asunder?

17. A damsel, who sometimes has her abode in Faïd, and sometimes is a neighbour to the people of Hejaaz!—how can she be an object of thy desire?

18. She alights at the eastern side of the two mountains, *Aja and Salma*, and then stops on the hills of Mohajjer; Rokhaam also and Ferda receive her with joy.

19. When she travels towards Yemen, we may suppose that she rests at Sawayik; and baits at the stations of Wahaaf and Telkhaam.

20. Break then so vain a connection with a mistress whose regard has ceased; for hapless is a union with a maid who has broken her vow!

21. When a damsel is kind and complacent, love her with ardent affection; but when her faith staggers and her constancy is shaken, let your disunion be unalterably fixed.

22. *Execute thy purpose, O Lebeid*, on a camel, wearied by long journeys, which have left but little of her former strength;—a camel whose sides are emaciated, and on whose back the bunch is diminished;

23. Yet even in this condition, when her flesh is extenuated, and her hair thin, when, after many a toilsome day, the thong of her shoes is broken,—

24. Even now she has a spirit so brisk, that she flies with the rein, like a dun cloud driven by the south wind, after it has discharged its shower ;

25. Or like a female wild-ass, whose teats are distended with milk, while the male, by whom she is with foal, is grown lean with driving his rivals from her, with biting and kicking them in his rage.

26. He runs with her up the crooked hills, although he has been wounded in his battles ; but her present coyness, compared with her late fondness, fills him with surprise.

27. He ascends the sandy hillock of Thalbut, and explores its deserted top, fearing lest an enemy should lurk behind the guide-stones.

28. There they remain till the close of the sixth month, till the frosty season is past ; they subsist on herbage without water : their time of fasting and of retirement is long.

29. The thorns of the buhma-plant wound their hind-legs, and the sultry winds of summer drive them violently in their course.

30. At length they form in their minds a fixed resolution *of seeking some cool rivulet*, and the object of their settled purpose is nearly attained.

31. They alternately raise high clouds of dust with an extended shade, as the smoke rises from a pile of dry wood newly kindled and flaming,

32. When fresh arfadge-plants are mingled in the heap, and the north wind plays with the blazing fire.

33. He passes on, but makes her run before him ; for such is his usual course, when he fears that she will linger behind.

34. They rush over the margin of the rivulet, they divide the waters of the full stream, whose banks are covered with the plants of kolaam,—

35. Banks, which a grove of reeds, part erect and part laid prostrate, overshades or clothes, as with a mantle.

36. Is this *the swiftness of my camel*? *No*; rather she resembles a wild-cow, whose calf has been devoured by ravenous beasts, when she has suffered him to graze apart, and relied for his protection on the leader of the herd ;

37. A mother with flat nostrils ; who, as soon as she misses her young one, ceases not to run hastily round the vales between the sand-hills, and to fill them with her mournful cries ;

38. With cries for her white-haired young, who now lies rolled in dust, after the dun wolves—hunters of the desert—have divided his mangled limbs, and their feast has not been interrupted.

39. They met him in the moment of her neglect ; they seized him with eagerness ; for, oh, how unerring are the arrows of death !

40. She passes the night in agony ; while the rain falls in a continued shower, and drenches the tangled groves with a profuse stream.

41. She shelters herself under the root of a tree, whose boughs are thick, apart from other trees, by the edge of a hill, whose fine sands are shaken by her motion ;

42. Yet the successive drops fall on her striped back, while the clouds of night veil the light of the stars.

43. Her white hair glimmers when the darkness is just coming on, and sparkles like the pearls of a merchant, when he scatters them from their string.

44. At length, when the clouds are dispersed, and the dawn appears, she rises early, and her hoofs glide on the slippery ground.

45. She grows impatient, and wild with grief : she lies frantic in the pool of Soayid for seven whole days with their twin-sisters, *seven nights* ;

46. And now she is in total despair ; her teats, which were full of milk, are grown flaccid and dry, though they are not worn by suckling and weaning her young.

47. She now hears the cry of the hunters ; she hears it, but sees them not ; she trembles with fear : for she knows that the hunters bring her destruction.

48. She sits quivering, and imagines that the cause of her dread will appear on one side and the other, before and behind her.

49. When the archers despair of *reaching her with their shafts*, they let slip their long-eared hounds, answering to their names, with bodies dry and thin.

50. They rush on: but she brandishes against them her extended horns, both long and sharp as javelins made by the skilful hand of Samhar,

51. Striving to repel them; for she knows that, if her effort be vain, the destined moment of her death must soon approach:

52. Then she drives *the dog* Casaab to his fate; she is stained with his blood; and Sokhaam is left prostrate on the field.

53. On a camel like this, when the flashes of the noontide vapour dance over the plain, and the sultry mist clothes the parched hills,

54. I accomplish my bold design, from which I am not deterred by any fear of reprehension from the most censorious man.

55. Knowest thou not, O Nawara, that I preserve the knot of affection entire, or cut it in two, as the objects of it are constant or faithless?

56. That I would leave without reluctance a country not congenial to my disposition, although death were instantly to overtake my soul?

57. Ah, thou knowest not how many serene nights, with sweet sport and mirthful revelry,

58. I pass in gay conversation; and often return to the flag of the wine-merchant, when he spreads it in the air, and sells his wine at a high price:

59. I purchase the old liquor at a dear rate, in dark leathern bottles long reposed, or in casks, black with pitch, whose seals I break, and then fill the cheerful goblet.

60. How often do I quaff pure wine in the morning, and draw towards me the fair lutanist, whose delicate fingers skilfully touch the strings !

61. I rise before the cock to take my morning draught, which I sip again and again, when the sleepers of the dawn awake.

62. On many a cold morning, when the freezing winds howl, and the hand of the North holds their reins, I turn aside their blast *from the travellers, whom I receive in my tent.*

63. When I rise early to defend my tribe, my arms are borne by a swift horse, whose girths resemble my sash adorned with gems.

64. I ascend a dusty hill to explore the situation of the foe, and our dust, flying in clouds, reaches the hostile standard.

65. At length, when the sun begins to sink into darkness, and the veil of night conceals the ambuscade and the stratagems of our enemy,

66. I descend into the vale ; and my steed raises his neck like the smooth branch of a lofty palm, which he who wishes to cut it cannot reach :

67. I incite him to run like a fleet ostrich in his impetuous course, until, when he boils in his rage and his bones are light,

68. His trappings are strongly agitated ; a shower flows down his neck ; and his surcingle is bathed in the scalding foam.

69. He lifts his head : he flies at liberty with the loose rein ; and hastens to his goal, as a dove hastens to the brook when her feverish thirst rages.

70. There is a mansion (*the palace of Nomaan*) filled with guests, unknown to each other ; hoping for presents and fearing reproof :

71. It is inhabited by men, like strong-necked lions, who menace one another with malignant hate, like the demons of Badiya, with feet firmly riveted in the conflict.

72. I disputed their false pretensions, yet admitted their real merit, according to my judgment ; nor could the noblest among them surpass me in renown.

73. Oft have I invited *a numerous company* to the death of a camel bought for slaughter, to be divided by lot with arrows of equal dimensions :

74. I invite them to draw lots for a camel without a foal, and for a camel with her young one, whose flesh I distribute to all the neighbours.

75. The guest and the stranger, admitted to my board, seem to have alighted in the sweet vale of Tebaala, luxuriant with vernal blossoms.

76. To the cords of my tent approaches every needy matron, worn with fatigue, like a camel doomed to die at her master's tomb, whose vesture is both scanty and ragged.

77. There they crown with meat, while the wintry winds contend with fierce blasts, a dish flowing like a rivulet, into which the famished orphans eagerly plunge.

78. When the nations are assembled, some hero of our tribe, firm in debate, never fails by superior powers to surmount the greatest difficulty.

79. He distributes equal shares ; he dispenses justice to the tribes ; he is indignant when their right is diminished ; and, to establish their right, often relinquishes his own.

80. He acts with greatness of mind and with nobleness of heart : he sheds the dew of his liberality on those who need his assistance ;— he scatters around his own gains and precious spoils, the prizes of his valour.

81. He belongs to a tribe whose ancestors have left them a perfect model ; and every tribe that descends from us will have patterns of excellence, and objects of imitation.

82. If their succour be asked, they instantly brace on their helmets, while their lances and breast-plates glitter like stars.

83. Their actions are not sullied by the rust of time, or tarnished by disgrace ; for their virtues are unshaken by any base desires.

84. He hath raised for us a fabric *of glory* with a lofty summit, to which all the aged and all the young men of our tribe aspire.

85. Be content, therefore, with the dispensations of the Supreme Ruler ; for He, who best knows our nature, has dispensed justice among us.

86. When peace has been established by our tribe, we keep it inviolate ; and He, who makes it, renders our prosperity complete.

87. Noble are the exertions of our heroes, when the tribe struggle with hardships : they are our leaders in war, and in peace the deciders of our claims :

88. They are an enlivening spring to their indigent neighbours, and to the disconsolate widows, whose year passes heavily away :

89. They are an illustrious race ; although their enviers may be slow in commending them, and the malevolent censurer may incline to their foe.





THE
POEM
OF
ANTARA.

THE ARGUMENT.

THIS Poem appears to have been a little older than that of Zohair ; for it must have been composed *during* the wars of Dahis, which the magnanimity of the two chiefs, extolled by Zohair, “so nobly terminated.” Antara, the gallant Absite, distinguished himself very early in the war by his valour in attacking the tribe of Dhobyen, and boasts in this composition that he had slain Demdem, the father of Hosein and of Harem, whom Ward, the son of Habes, afterwards put to death. An old enmity subsisted, it seems, between our poet and those two young men, who, as Antara believed, had calumniated him without provocation ; and his chief object in this poem was to blazon his own achievements and exploits, and to denounce implacable resentment against the calumniators, whom his menaces were likely to intimidate. Yet so harsh an argument is tempered by a strain in some parts elegiac and amatory : for even this vengeful impetuous warrior found himself obliged to comply with the custom of the Arabian poets, “who had left,” as he complains, “little new imagery for their successors.”

He begins with a pathetic address to the bower of his beloved Abba, and to the ruins of her deserted mansion : he bewails her sudden departure, the distance of her new abode, and the unhappy variance between their respective clans : he describes his passion and the beauties of his mistress with great energy: thence he passes to his own laborious course of life, contrasted with the voluptuous indolence of the fair, and gives a forcible description of his camel, whom he compares to a male ostrich hastening to visit the eggs, which the female (whose usual neglect of them is mentioned by naturalists) had left in a remote valley. He next expatiates on his various accomplishments and virtues : his mildness to those who treat him kindly, his fierceness to those who injure him ; his disregard of wealth, his gaiety, liberality, and, above all, his military prowess and spirit of enterprise, on which he triumphantly enlarges through the rest of the poem, except four couplets, in which he alludes obscurely to a certain love adventure ; and after many animated descriptions of battles and single combats, he concludes with a wish that he may live to slay the two sons of Demdem, and with a bitter exultation on the death of their father, whom he had left a prey to the wild beasts and the vultures.

The metre is iambic, like that of the poem immediately preceding.

THE POEM OF ANTARA.



HAVE the bards who preceded me left any theme unsung? *What, therefore, shall be my subject? Love only must supply my lay.* Dost thou then recollect, after long consideration, the mansion of thy beloved?

2. O bower of Abla, in the valley of Jiwaa, give me tidings of my love! O bower of Abla, may the morning rise on thee with prosperity and health!

3. There I stopped my camel, large as a tower, the anguish of my passion having delayed the accomplishment of my bold enterprise,

4. Whilst Abla was dwelling in Jiwaa, and our tribe *were stationed* in Hazn, and Samaan, and Motathallem.

5. Hail, dear ruins! with whose possessors I had old engagements; more dreary and more desolate *are you become*, after the departure of my beloved Omm Alheitham!

6. She dwells in the land of my foes, like roaring lions: oh, how painful has been my search after thee, fair daughter of Makhrem!

7. I felt myself attached to her at our first interview, although I had slain her countrymen in battle: I assure thee, by the life of thy father, that of my attachment there can be no doubt.

8. *Thou hast possessed thyself of my heart*; thou hast fixed thy abode in it (imagine not that I delude thee), and art settled there as a beloved and cherished inhabitant.

9. *Yet* how can I visit *my fair one*, whilst her family have their vernal mansion in Oneizatain, and mine are stationed in Ghailem?

10. Surely thou hast firmly resolved to depart from me, since the camels of thy tribe are bridled even in so dark a night.

11. Nothing so much alarms me *with a signal of her destined removal* as my seeing the camels of burden, which belong to her tribe, grazing on khimkhim-berries in the midst of their tents:

12. Among them *are* forty-two milch-camels, dark as the plumes of a coal-black raven.

13. Then, Antara, she 'pierced thee to the heart with her well-pointed teeth exquisitely white, the kiss of which is delicious, and the taste ravishingly sweet!

14. From the mouth of this lovely damsel, when you kiss her lips, proceeds the fragrance of musk, as from the vase of a perfumer;

15. Or like the scent of a blooming bower, whose plants the gentle rains have kept in continual verdure, which no filth has sullied, and to which there has been no resort:

16. Every morning-cloud, clear of hail, has drenched it with a plentiful shower, and has left all the little cavities in the earth both round and bright as coins of silver :

17. Profusely and copiously it descends ; and every evening the stream, which nothing intercepts, gushes rapidly through it.

18. The flies remain in it with incessant buzzing, and their murmurs are like the song of a man exhilarated with wine :

19. Their sound, when they strike their slender legs against each other, is like the sound of a flint, from which the sparks are forced by a man with one arm, intent upon his labour.

20. While thou, *fair* Abba, reclinest both evening and morning on the lap of a soft couch, I pass whole nights on the back of a dark-coloured horse well caparisoned :

21. My only cushion is the saddle of a charger with firm thick feet, strong-sided, and large in the place of his girths.

22. Shall a camel of Shaden bear me to thy tent, *a camel*, far removed from her country, destitute of milk, and separated from the herd ?

23. She waves her tail in her playful mood, and proudly moves her body from side to side, even at the end of her nightly excursion : she strikes the hills with her quickly-moving and firmly-trampling hoofs.

24. Thus the bird without ears, between whose feet there is but a small space, *the swift ostrich* beats the ground in his evening course.

25. The young ostriches gather themselves around him, as a multitude of black Yemenian camels assemble round their Abyssinian *herdman*, who is unable to express himself *in the language of Arabia*.

26. They follow him, guided by the loftiness of his head, which resembles the carriage of travelling damsels, raised on high, and covered like a tent.

27. His head, *though lofty*, is small: when he is going to visit the eggs, *which his female left* in Dhula-sheira, he looks like an Ethiop with short ears in a trailing garment of furred hides.

28. *My camel* drinks the water of Dehradhain, but starts aside with disdain from the *hostile* rivulets of Dailem.

29. She turns her right side, as if she were in fear of some large-headed screamer of the night,—

30. Of a hideous wild-cat fixed to her body, who, as often as she bent herself towards him in her wrath, assailed her with his claws and his teeth.

31. I continue all day on the well-cemented tower of her back, strongly raised, and firm as the pillars of him who pitches a tent.

32. *When she rests*, she crouches on the soft bank of Ridaa, and groans through fatigue, like the soft sounding reed, which she presses with her weight.

33. *Her sweat* resembles thick rob or tenacious pitch, which the kindled fire causes to bubble in the sides of a caldron ;

34. It gushes from behind her ears, when she boils with rage, exults in her strength, and struts in her pride, like the stallion of her herd, when his rivals assail him.

35. O Ab!a, although thou droppest thy veil before me, yet know, that by my agility I have made captive many a knight clad in complete armour.

36. Bestow on me the commendation which thou knowest to be due ; since my nature is gentle and mild, when my rights are not invaded ;

37. But, when I am injured, my resentment is firm, and bitter as coloquinteda to the taste of the aggressor.

38. I quaff, when the noontide heat is abated, old wine, purchased with bright and well-stamped coin ;

39. I quaff it in a goblet of yellow glass variegated with white streaks, whose companion is a glittering flagon, well secured by its lid from the blasts of the north :

40. When I drink it, my wealth is dissipated, but my fame remains abundant and unimpaired ;

41. And when I return to sobriety, the dew of my liberality continues as fresh as before : give due honour, therefore, to those qualities which thou knowest me to possess.

42. Many a consort of a fair one, whose beauty required no ornaments, have I left prostrate on the ground ; and the life-blood has run sounding from his veins, opened by my javelin, like the mouth of a camel with a divided lip :

43. With a nimble and double-handed stroke, I prevented his attack ; and the stream that gushed from the penetrating wound bore the colour of anemones.

44. Go, ask the warriors, O daughter of Malec, if thou art ignorant of my valour, *ask them* that which thou knowest not ;

45. *Ask how* I act, when I am constantly fixed to the saddle of an elegant horse, swimming in his course, whom my bold antagonists alternately wound ;

46. Yet sometimes he advances alone to the conflict, and sometimes he stands collected in a multitudinous throng of heroes with strong bows :

47. *Ask*, and whoever has been witness to the combat will inform thee that I am impetuous in battle, but regardless of the spoils.

48. Many a warrior, clad in a suit of mail, at whose violent assault the boldest men have trembled, who neither had saved himself by swift flight nor by abject submission,

49. Has this arm laid prone with a rapid blow from a well-straightened javelin, firm between the knots :

50. Broad were the lips of the wound ; and the noise of the rushing blood called forth the wolves, prowling in the night, and pinched with hunger :

51. With my swift lance did I pierce his coat of mail ; and no warrior, however brave, is secure from its point.

52. I left him, like a sacrificed victim, to the lions of the forest, who feasted on him between the crown of his head and his wrists.

53. Often have I burst the interior folds of a well-wrought habergeon, worn by a famed warrior appointed to maintain his post ;

54. Whose hands were brisk in casting lots, when winter demands such recreation : a man censured for his disregard of wealth, and for causing the wine-merchant to strike his flag, *by purchasing all his store.*

55. When he saw me descend from my steed, and rush towards him, he grinned with horror, but with no smile of joy.

56. My engagement with him lasted the whole day, until his head and fingers, covered with clotted gore, appeared to be stained with the juice of idhlim.

57. Then I fixed him with my lance ; I struck him to the heart with an Indian scimitar, the blade of which was of a bright water, and rapid was the stroke it gave :

58. A warrior, whose armour seemed to be braced on a lofty tree ; a chief, who, like a king, wore sandals of leather stained with Egyptian thorn : a hero, without an equal.

59. O lovely heifer ! what a sweet prey was she to a hunter permitted to chase her ! To me she was wholly denied : oh, would to heaven that she had not been forbidden me !

60. I sent forth my handmaid, and said to her : "Go, ask tidings inquisitively of my beloved, and bring me intelligence."

61. She said : "I have seen the hostile guards negligent of their watch, and the wild heifer may be smitten by any archer who desires to shoot her."

62. Then she turned towards me with the neck of a young roe, well grown, of an exquisite breed among the gazals of the wood : a roe with a milk-white face.

63. I have been informed of a man ungrateful for my kindness ; but ingratitude turns the mind of a benefactor from any more beneficence.

64. The instructions which my valiant uncle gave me I have diligently observed ; at the time when the lips are drawn away from the bright teeth,

65. In the struggle of the fight, into whose deepest gulfs the warriors plunge themselves without complaint or murmur.

66. When my tribe has placed me as a shield between them and the hostile spears, I have not ignobly declined the danger, although the place where I fixed my foot was too narrow to admit a companion.

67. When I heard the din of Morra raised in the field, and the sons of Rabeia in the thick dust ;

68.* And the shouts of Dhohol at the moment of assault, when they rush in troops to the conflict with all their sharp-biting lions ;

69. When even the mildest of the tribes saw the skirmish under their standards (and Death *spreads havoc* under the standard of the mildest nation),

70. Then I knew with certainty, that, in so fierce a contest with them, many a heavy blow would make the perched birds of the brain fly quickly from every skull:

71. As soon as I beheld the legions of our enemies advancing, and animating one another to battle, I too rushed forward, and acted without reproach.

72. The troops called out "Antara !" while javelins, long as the cords of a well, were forcibly thrust against the chest of my dark steed.

73. I ceased not to charge the foe with the neck and breast of my horse, until he was mantled in blood.

74. My steed, bent aside with the stroke of the lances in his forehead, complained to me with gushing tears and tender sobbing :

75. Had he known the art of discourse, he would have addressed me in a plaintive strain ; and had he possessed the faculty of speech, he would have spoken to me distinctly.

76. In the midst of the black dust, the horses were impetuously rushing with disfigured countenances ; every robust stallion and every strong-limbed short-haired male.

77. Then my soul was healed, and all my anguish was dispersed by the cry of the warriors, saying, " Well done, Antara : charge again ! "

78. My camels too are obedient to my will, as often as I desire to kindle the ardour of my heart, and press it on to some arduous enterprise.

79. Yet I fear lest death should seize me before the adverse turn of war has overtaken the two sons of Demdem :

80. Men who attacked my reputation, when I had given them no offence, and vowed, when I had never assailed them, to shed my blood ;—

81. Yes, they injured me : but I have left their father, like a victim, to be mangled by the lions of the wood, and by the eagles advanced in years.





THE
P O E M
OF
A M R U .

THE ARGUMENT.

THE discordant and inconsistent accounts of the commentators, who seem to have collected without examination every tradition that presented itself, have left us very much in the dark on the subject of the two following poems ; but the common opinion, which appears to me the most probable, is that they are, in fact, political and adverse declamations, which were delivered by Amru and Hareth at the head of their respective clans, before Amru the son of Hinda, King of Hira in Mesopotamia, who had assumed the office of mediator between them after a most obstinate war, and had undertaken to hear a discussion of their several claims to pre-eminence, and to decide their cause with perfect impartiality. In some copies, indeed, as in those of Nahas and of Zauzeni, the two poems are separated ; and in that of Obaidalla the poem of Hareth is totally omitted.

Were I to draw my opinion solely from the structure and general turn of Amru's composition, I should conceive that the King of Hira, who, like other tyrants, wished "to make all

men just but himself, and to leave all nations free but his own," had attempted to enslave the powerful tribe of Tagleb, and to appoint a prefect over them, but that the warlike possessors of the deserts and forests had openly disclaimed his authority, and employed their principal leader and poet to send him defiance, and magnify their own independent spirit.

Some Arabian writers assert, what there is abundant reason to believe, that the above-mentioned king was killed by the author of the following poem, who composed it, say they, on that occasion ; but the king himself is personally addressed by the poet, and warned against precipitation in deciding the contest ; and where mention is made of "crowned heads left prostrate on the field," no particular monarch seems to be intended ; but the conjunction *copulative* has the force, as it often has in Arabic, of a *frequentative* particle.

Let us then, where certainty cannot be obtained, be satisfied with high probability, and suppose, with Tabreizi, that the two tribes of Becr and Tagleb, having exhausted one another in a long war, to which the murder of Coleib the Taglebite had given rise, agreed to terminate their ruinous quarrel, and to make the King of Hira their umpire ; that on the day appointed the tribes met before the palace or royal tent, and that Amru the son of Celthum, prince of the Taglebites, either pronounced his poem, according to the custom of the Arabs, or stated his pretensions in a solemn speech, which he afterwards versified, that it might be more easily remembered by his tribe and their posterity.

The oration, or poem, or whatever it may be called, is arrogant beyond all imagination, and contains hardly a colour of argument. The prince was most probably a vain young man, proud of his accomplishments, and elate with success in his wars ; but his production could not fail of becoming extremely popular among his countrymen ; and his own family, the descendants of Josham the son of Becr, were so infatuated with it that (as one of their own poets admits) "they could scarce ever desist from

repeating it, and thought they had attained the summit of glory, without any farther exertions of virtue."

He begins with a strain perfectly Anacreontic ; the elegiac style of the former poems not being well adapted to his eager exultation and triumph : yet there is some mixture of complaint on the departure of his mistress, whose beauties he delineates with a boldness and energy highly characteristic of unpolished manners. The rest of his work consists of menaces, vaunts, and exaggerated applause of his own tribe for their generosity and prowess, the goodness of their horses, the beauty of their women, the extent of their possessions, and even the number of their ships ;—which boasts were so well founded that, according to some authois, if Mohammed had not been born, the Taglebites would have appropriated the dominion of all Arabia, and possibly would have erected a mighty state, both civil and maritime.

This poem is composed in *copious* verse, or metre of the fourth species, according to the following form :

"Amatores | puellarum | misellos
Ocellorum | nitor multos | fefellit."

But the compound foot *amore furens* is used at pleasure, instead of the first epitrite ; as,

"Venusta puel | la, tarda venis | ad hortum,
Parata lyra est, | paratus odor | rosarum."

THE POEM OF AMRU.



OLLA !—Awake, sweet damsel, and bring
our morning draught in thy capacious
goblet ; nor suffer the rich wines of
Enderein to be longer hoarded :

2. Bring the well-tempered wine, that seems to be
tinctured with saffron, and, when it is diluted with
water, overflows the cup.

3. This is the liquor which diverts the anxious
lover from his passion ; and, as soon as he tastes it,
he is perfectly composed :

4. Hence thou seest the penurious churl, when
the circling bowl passes him, grow regardless of his
pelf :

5.* When its potent flames have seized the dis-
creetest of our youths, thou wouldst imagine him to be
in a frenzy.

6. Thou turnest the goblet from us, O mother of
Amru ; for the true course of the goblet is to the
right hand :

7. He is not the least amiable of thy three com-
panions, O mother of Amru, to whom thou hast not
presented the morning bowl.

8.* How many a cup have I purchased in Balbec !
how many more in Damascus and Kasirein !

9. Surely our allotted hour of fate will overtake us ;
since we are destined to death, and death to us.

10. O stay a while, before we separate, thou lovely rider on camels, that we may relate to thee our sorrows, and thou to us thy delights !

11. O stay!—that we may inquire whether thou hast altered thy purpose of departing hastily, or whether thou hast wholly deceived thy too confident lover :

12. In the hateful day of battle, whilst he struggles amid wounds and blows, may the Ruler of the world refresh thy sight with coolness, and gratify it with every desired object !

13. O Amru, when thou visitest thy fair one in secret, and when the eyes of lurking enemies are closed in rest,

14. She displays two lovely arms, fair and full as the limbs of a long-necked snow-white young camel, that frisks in the vernal season over the sand-banks and green hillocks ;

15. And two sweet breasts, smooth and white as vessels of ivory, modestly defended from the hand of those who presume to touch them :

16. She discovers her slender shape, tall and well proportioned, and her sides gracefully rising with all their attendant charms ;

17.* Her hips elegantly swelling, which the entrance of the tent is scarce large enough to admit, and her waist, the beauty of which drives me to madness ;

18.* With two charming columns of jasper or polished marble, on which hang rings and trinkets making a stridulous sound.

19. My youthful passion is rekindled, and my ardent desire revives, when I see the travelling camels of my fair one driven along in the evening ;

20. When the towns of Yemama appear in sight, exalted above the plains, and shining like bright sabres in the hands of those who have unsheathed them.

21. *When she departs*, the grief of a she-camel who seeks her lost foal, and returns despairing with piercing cries, equals not my anguish ;

22. Nor that of a widow, with snowy locks, whose mourning never ceases for her nine children, of whom nothing remains, but what the tomb has concealed.

23. *Such is our fate!* This day and the morrow, and the morning after them, are pledges in the hand of destiny for events of which we have no knowledge.

24. O son of Hinda, be not precipitate in giving judgment against us : hear us with patience, and we will give thee certain information ;—

25. That we lead our standards to battle, *like camels to the pool*, of a white hue, and bring them back stained with blood, in which they have quenched their thirst ;

26. That our days of prosperity, in which we have refused to obey the commands of kings, have been long and brilliant.

27. Many a chief of his nation, on whom the regal diadem has been placed, the refuge of those who implored his protection,

28. Have we left prostrate on the field, while his horses waited by his side, with one of their hoofs bent, and with bridles richly adorned.

29.* Often have we fixed our mansions in Dhu Thaluh, towards the districts of Syria, and have kept at a distance those who menaced us.

30. *We were so disguised in our armour, that the dogs of the tribe snarled at us ; yet we stripped the branches from every thorny tree (every armed warrior) that opposed us.*

31. When we roll the millstone of war over a little clan, they are ground to flour in the first battle ;

32. From the eastern side of Najd the cloth of the mill is spread, and whatever we cast into it soon becomes impalpable powder.

33. You alight on our hills as guests are received in their station, and we hasten to give you a warm reception, lest you should complain of our backwardness :

34. We invite you to our board, and speedily prepare for your entertainment a solid rock, which, before daybreak, shall reduce you to dust.

35. Surely hatred after hatred is manifested by thee, *O hostile chief!* and thy secret rancour has been revealed :

36. But we have inherited glory, as the race of Maad well knows ; we have fought with valour till our fame has been illustrious.

37. When the falling pillars of our tents quiver over our furniture, we defend our neighbours from the impending ruin.

38. We disperse our gifts to our countrymen, but disdain to share their spoils ; and the burdens which we bear we support for their advantage.

39. When the troops of the foe are at a distance from us, we dart our javelins ; and when we close in the combat, we strike with sharp sabres ;—

40. Our dark javelins, exquisitely wrought of Kha-thaian reeds, slender and delicate ; our sabres, bright and piercing :

41. With these we cleave in pieces the heads of our enemies ; we mow—we cut down their necks as with sickles :

42. Then might you imagine the skulls of heroes on the plain to be the bales of a camel thrown on rocky ground.

43. Instead of submitting to them, we crush their heads ; and their terror is such, that they know not on which side the danger is to be feared.

44. Our scimitars, whose strokes are furiously interchanged, are as little regarded by us as twisted sashes in the hands of playful children.

45. Their armour and ours, stained reciprocally with our blood, seems to be dyed or painted with the juice of the crimson syringa-flower.

46. At a time when the tribe is reluctant to charge the foe, apprehensive of some probable disaster,

47. Then we lead on our troop, like a mountain with a pointed summit ; we preserve our reputation, and advance in the foremost ranks,

48. With youths, who consider death as the completion of glory, and with aged heroes experienced in war :

49. We challenge all the clans together to contend with us, and we boldly preclude their sons from approaching the mansion of our children.

50. On the day when we are anxious to protect our families, we keep vigilant guard, clad in complete steel ;

51. But on the day when we have no such anxiety for them, our legions assemble in full council.

52. Led by a chief among the descendants of Josham the son of Becr, we bruise our adversaries, both the weak and the strong.

53.* Oh, the nations remember not the time when we bowed the neck, or ever flagged in the conflict !

54. Oh, let no people be infatuated and violent against us ; for we will requite their infatuation, which surpasses the folly of the most foolish !

55. On what pretence, O Amru, son of Hinda, should we be subject to the sovereign whom thou wouldst place over us?

56. By what pretence, O Amru, son of Hinda, dost thou yield to our calumniators, and treat us with indignity?

57. Thou hast menaced us: thou hast thought to intimidate us; but, gently, O King!—say, when were we ever the vassals of thy mother?

58. Our javelins, O Amru, disdain to relax their vehemence before thee in assailing our foes:

59. Whenever a man uses force to bend them, they start back, and become inflexibly rigid,—

60. So rigid, that when they return to their former state, they ring with a shrill noise, piercing the neck and forehead of him who touches them.

61. Hast thou ever been informed that Josham the son of Becr, in battles anciently fought, was at any time remiss?

62. We have inherited the renown of Alkama the son of Saif, who by dint of valour obtained admission for us into the castles of glory.

63. We are heirs to Mohalhil, and to Zoheir, the flower of his tribe: O of how noble a treasure were they the preservers!

64. From Attab also and from Celthum we have received the inheritance transmitted from their progenitors.

65. By Dhu'lborra, of whose fame thou hast heard the report, have we been protected ; and through him we protect those who seek our aid.

66. Before him the adventurous Coleib sprung from us : and what species of glory is there which we have not attained ?

67. When our antagonists twist against us the cords *of battle*, either we burst the knot or rend the necks of our opponents.

68. We shall be found the firmest of tribes in keeping our defensive alliance, and the most faithful in observing the bond of our treaties.

69. When the flames were kindled in the mountain, on the morning of an excursion, we gave succour more important than the aid of other allies.

70. To give immediate relief, we kept all our herds confined in Dhu Oratheï, until our milch-camels of a noble breed were forced to graze on withered herbs.

71. We protect with generosity the man who submits to us ; but chastise with firmness him by whom we are insulted.

72. We reject the offers of those who have displeased us ; but accept the presents of those with whom we are satisfied.

73. We succoured the right wing, when our troops engaged in combat, and our valiant brothers gave support to the left.

74. They made a fierce attack against the legions which opposed them, and we not less fiercely assailed the squadrons by which we were opposed.

75. They returned with booty and with rich spoils, and the sons of kings were among our captives.

76. To you, O descendants of Becr, to you we address ourselves ;—have you not yet learned the truth concerning us ?

77. Have you not experienced with what impetuosity our troops have attacked your troops, and with what force they have darted their javelins ?

78. We are armed with bright sabres, and clad in habergeons made in Yemen ; our scimitars are part straight, part bent.

79. We have coats of mail that glitter like lightning ; the plaits of which are seen in wrinkles above our belts :

80. When at any time our heroes put them off, you may see their skin blackened with the pressure of the steel.

81. The plaits of our hauberks resemble the surface of a pool which the winds have ruffled in their course.

82. On the morning of attack, we are borne into the field on short-haired steeds, which have been known to us from the time when we weaned them, and which we rescued from our foes after they had been taken.

83.* They rush to the fight, armed with breast-plates of steel ; they leave it with their manes dishevelled and dusty, and the reins, tied in knots, lie on their necks.

84. We inherited this excellent breed from our virtuous ancestors ; and on our death they will be inherited by our sons.

85. All the tribes of Maad perfectly know, when their tents are pitched in the well-watered valleys,

86. That we support the distressed in every barren year, and are bountiful to such as solicit our bounty ;

87.* That we defend the oppressed, when we think it just ; and fix our abode in Arabia, where we find it convenient ;

88. That we give succour to those that are near us, when the bright scimitars make the eyes of our heroes wink.

89. We entertain strangers at our board whenever we are able ; but we hurl destruction on those who approach us hostilely.

90. We are the tribe who drink water from the clearest brooks ; whilst other clans are forced to drink it foul and muddy.

91. Go, ask the sons of Tamah and of Domia, how they have found us in the conflict !

92. Behind us come our lovely, our charming damsels, whom we guard so vigilantly that they cannot be made captive, or even treated with disrespect :

93. Fair maidens, descended from Josham the son of Becr, who comprise every species of beauty, both in the opinion of men and in truth.

94. They have exacted a promise from their husbands, that, when they engaged with the hostile legions, distinguished by marks of valour,

95. They would bring back, as spoils, coats of mail and scimitars, and captives led chained in pairs.

96.* Thou mayst behold us sallying forth into the open plain, whilst every other tribe seeks auxiliaries through fear of our prowess.

97. When our damsels are on foot, they walk with graceful motions, and wave their bodies like those of libertines heated with wine.

98. They feed with their fair hands our coursers of noble birth, and say to us : "You are no husbands of ours, unless you protect us from the foe."

99. Yes, if we defend not them, we retain no possessions of value after their loss, nor do we think even life desirable :

100. But nothing can afford our sweet maids so sure a protection as the strokes of our sabres, which make men's arms fly off like the clashing wands of playful boys.

101.* We seem, when our drawn scimitars are displayed, to protect mankind, as fathers protect their children.

102.* Our heroes roll the heads of their enemies, as the strong well-made youths roll their balls in the smooth vale.

103. This world is ours, and all that appears on the face of it ; and when we do attack, we attack with irresistible force.

104. When a tyrant oppresses and insults a nation, we disdain to degrade ourselves by submitting to his will.

105. We have been called injurious, although we have injured no man ; but if they persist in calumniating us, we will show the vehemence of our anger.

106. As soon as a child of our tribe is weaned from his mother, the loftiest chiefs of other clans bend the knee and pay him homage.

107.* We force our enemies to taste the unmixed draught of death ; and heavy is the overthrow of our adversaries in battle.

108. We fill the earth with our tents, until it becomes too narrow to contain them ; and cover the surface of the ocean with our ships.





THE
POEM
OF
HARETH.

THE ARGUMENT.

WHEN Amru had finished his extravagant panegyric on the tribe of Tagleb, and had received the loud applause of his own party, Hareth arose, and pronounced the following poem, or speech in verse; which he delivered, according to some authors, without any meditation, but which, as others assert, with greater appearance of probability, he had prepared and gotten by heart.

Although, if we believe Asmai, the poet was considerably above a hundred years old at this time, yet he is said to have poured forth his couplets with such boiling ardour, that, without perceiving it, "he cut his hand with the string of his bow, on which," after the manner of the Arabian orators, "he leaned while he was speaking."

Whatever was his age, the wisdom and art of his composition are finely contrasted with the youthful imprudence of his adversary, who must have exasperated the King, instead of conciliating his good will, and seems even to have menaced the very man from whom he was asking a favourable judgment. Hareth, on the contrary, begins with complimenting the Queen, whose name was Asoma, and who heard him behind the tapestry : he appears to have introduced another of his favourites, Hinda, merely because that was the name of the king's mother ; and he celebrates the monarch himself, as a model of justice, valour, and magnanimity. The description of his camel, which he interweaves according to custom, is very short ; and he opens the defence of his tribe with coolness and moderation ; but as he proceeds his indignation seems to be kindled, and the rest of his harangue consists of sharp expostulations and bitter sarcasms, not without much sound reasoning, and a number of allusions to facts, which cannot but be imperfectly known to us, though they must have been fresh in the memory of his hearers.

The general scope of his argument is that no blame was justly imputable to the sons of Becr for the many calamities which the Taglebites had endured, and which had been principally occasioned by their own supineness and indiscretion.

The oration, or poem, or whatever it may be denominated, had its full effect on the mind of the royal umpire, who decided the cause in favour of the Becrites, and lost his life for a decision apparently just. He must have remarked the fiery spirit of the poet Amru, from the style of his eloquence, as Cæsar first discovered the impetuous vehemence of Brutus' temper from his speech delivered at Nice, in favour of King Deiotarus : but neither the Arabian nor the Roman tyrant were sufficiently on their guard against men whom they had irritated even to fury.

This poem is composed in *light* verse, or metre of the eleventh class, consisting of epitrites, ionic feet, and pæons, variously intermixed, as in this form :

“Amarylli, | dulci lyiâ | modularē
Molle carmen | sub arbore | fusa sacrâ.”

Sometimes a molossus ends the distich, as :

“Dulce carmen | sub arbore | fusa sacrâ
Modularē, | dum sylvulæ | respondent.”

The close of a couplet in this measure has often the cadence of a Latin or Greek hexameter ; thus, v. 20 :

Tis'-háli khaílun khilála dháca rogáo—

that is, literally,

Hinnitûs modulantur equi, fremitûsque cameli.

THE POEM OF HARETH.

BOTH fair Asoma give us notice of her departure? Oh, why are sojourners so frequently weary of their sojourning?

2. *She is resolved to depart*, after our mutual vows among the sandy hillocks of Shamma, and in the nearer station of Khalsa ;—

3. *Vows, repeated in* Mohayat, Sifah, and Aglai, in Dhu Fitak, Adhib, and Wafa ;—

4. *Vows, renewed* in the bowers of Katha, and the dales of Shoreib, in the Two Valleys, and in the plains of Ayla.

5. I see no remains of the troth which she plighted in those stations ; and I waste the day in tears, frantic with grief ; but oh, what part of my happiness will tears restore ?

6. Yet, O Hareth, *a new passion invites thee* ; for Hinda is before thy eyes, and the fire which she kindles at night in the hills will direct thee to her abode :

7. She kindles it with abundance of wood between the hilly stations of Akeik and Shakhsein, and it blazes like the splendour of the sun.

8. I have been contemplating her fire from a distance on the hill whence our excursions are made ; but oh, the scorching heat and the calamities of war prevent me from approaching her !

9. But I seek assistance in dispelling my care, when the sojourner of the tent hastily leaves his abode *through fear of some impending calamity*,

10. On a camel, swift as an ostrich, the mother of many young ones ; the long-necked inhabitant of the desert,

11. Who hears a soft sound, and dreads the approach of the hunter, in the afternoon, just before the dusk of evening :

12. Then mayst thou see behind her, from the quick motion of her legs, and the force with which she strikes the earth, a cloud of dust, thin as the gossamer,

13. And the traces of her hoofs, which are such as to be soon effaced by the winds blowing over the sandy plain.

14. With her I disport myself in the sultry noon, whilst every son of valour is like a blind camel devoted to death.

15. Yet misfortunes and evil tidings have brought on us affairs which give us affliction and anguish ;

16. For our brethren, the family of Arakem, *the dragon-eyed*, have transgressed the bounds of justice against us, and have been vehement in their invectives :

17. They have confounded the blameless among us with the guilty, and the most perfect innocence has not escaped their censure.

18. They have insisted that all who pitch their tents in the desert are our associates, and that we are involved in their offences.

19. They assembled their forces at night, and as soon as the dawn appeared, there was nothing heard among them but a tumultuous noise

20. Of those who called and those who answered ; the neighing of horses, and, among the rest, the lowing of camels.

21. O thou, who adornest thy flowery speeches concerning us before Amru, can this falsehood be long undetected ?

22. Imagine not that thy instigation will animate him against us, or humiliate us ; since long before thee our enemies have openly calumniated us ;

23. Yet we continued advancing ourselves in defiance of their hate, with laudable self-sufficiency and exalted reputation.

24. Before this day, the eyes of nations have been dazzled by our glory, and have been moved by envious indignation and obstinate resentment.

25. Fortune seemed to raise for us a dark rock, with a pointed summit, dispelling the clouds ;

26. Thick and firm, secured from calamity ; not to be weakened by any disaster, however grievous and violent.

27.* Intrust to our wisdom every momentous affair from which you desire to be extricated, and by which the assemblies of chiefs are made unhappy.

28.* If you inquire concerning our wars between Milaha and Dhakib, you will find on their plains many an unavenged and many an avenged corse :

29.* Or, if you examine diligently the questions in which all tribes are deeply interested, you will see the difference between your offences and our innocence.

30.* But if you decline *this fair discussion*, we shall turn from you with resentment, concealing hatred in our bosoms, as the mote is concealed in the closed eyelids.

31.* Reject, if you please, the terms which we offer ; but of whom have you heard that surpasses us in glory ?

32.* You have perfectly known us on the days when the warriors have assailed one another with rapacious violence, when every tribe has raised a tumultuous din ;

33.* When we brought up our camels from the palm-groves of Bahrein, and drove them by rapid marches, till we reached the plain of Hisa.

34. Then we advanced against the sons of Tameim, and when the sacred month required a cessation of our war, we carried away the daughters of their tribe for our handmaids.

35. *In opposition to us*, neither could the valiant man keep his ground on the level field, nor did precipitate flight avail the faint-hearted.

36. No ; the coward, who ran hastily from the plain, was not saved by the summit of rocks or the roughness of craggy paths.

37. By these exertions we maintained our pre-eminence over the tribes, until Mondir, son of the beautiful Maisema, obtained the dominion.

38. He was a prince who bore witness to our valour on the day of Hayarain, when the calamity of war was, in truth, a calamity :

39. A prince who subjected nations ; whose equal in magnanimity could not be found among them.

40. Desist then from vaunting and from hostility : you have indeed pretended ignorance of our claims, but from that pretended ignorance will proceed your woe.

41. Remember well the oaths taken in Dhu'l-mejaaz : the covenants and vows of amity, which were made there of old.

42. Beware of injustice and violence ; nor let your intemperate passions impel you to violate your contracts written on tablets.

43. Know, that we and you, on the day when we made our treaty, were equally bound by our respective engagements.

44. Are we responsible for the crimes of Canda?
Shall their conquering chief have the spoils, and shall
reprisals be made upon us?

45. Are we responsible for the excesses of Haneifa,
and for all the conflicts which the dusty plain has
seen accumulated?

46. Must we answer for the offences of the sons
of Ateik? No: whoever has broken his covenant,
we are innocent of their war.

47. Doth the guilt of Ibaad hang on our heads,
as the burden is suspended on the centre of the
camel's girths?

48. Has the blame due to Kodhaa fallen upon
us? or, rather, are we not secure from a single drop
of their faults?

49. Are we responsible for the crimes of Iyaad,
as it was said to the tribe of Thasm, "Your brethren
are rebels?"

50. Those who raised the dissension belong not
to us, neither Kais, nor Jondal, nor Hadda.

51. Vain pretexts! Unjust aspersions! *That we
should suffer for others*, as the roe is sacrificed in the
place of the sheep!

52. Fourscore warriors, indeed, advanced from
Tameim, and their hands carried lances, whose points
were Fate;

53. Yet they profaned not the hallowed places of
the sons of Rizaah on the hills of Nitaa, when they
called on them for mercy.

54. They left them, however, wounded on the plain, and returned with captive herds and flocks so numerous, that the drivers of them were deafened with their cries.

55. The vanquished tribe came afterwards to implore restitution, but not a single beast, either black or of a bright hue, was restored to them.

56. So they retired with heart-breaking afflictions, nor could any stream of water quench their ardent rage.

57. After this a troop of horsemen, led by the impetuous Ghallaak, assailed them without remorse or pity :

58. Full many a son of Tagleb has been smitten, whose blood has flowed unrevenged, while the black dust covered his corse.

59. Are your cares comparable to those of our tribe, when Mondir waged war against them? Are we, *like you*, become subject to the son of Hinda?

60. When he fixed his abode in the lofty turrets of Maisuna, and sojourned in the nearer stations of Khaltha,

61. From every tribe there flocked around him a company of robbers, impetuous as eagles :

62. He led them on, and supplied them with dates and with water ; so the will of God was accomplished, and afflicted men doomed to affliction.

63. Then you invited them to attack you by your want of circumspection ; and the vain security of your intemperate joy impelled them to be hostile.

64. They surprised you not, indeed, by a sudden assault ; but *they advanced, and* the sultry vapour of noon, *through which you saw them*, increased their magnitude.

65. O thou inveterate and glozing calumniator, who inveighest against us before King Amru, will there be no end of thy unjust invectives ?

66. Between Amru and us many acts of amity have passed, and from all of them, no doubt, has benefit arisen.

67. He is a just prince, and the most accomplished that walks the earth : all praise is below his merit :

68. A prince descended from Irem ! A warrior like him ought ever to be encircled with troops of genii, for he protects his domain, and refuses to punish even his opponents :

69. A monarch who knows us by three infallible signs, by each of which our excellence is decided :—

70. *The first is*, the conspicuous token of our valour, when all Arabia came forth in the rocky vales, each tribe of Maad under their banner,

71. And assembled, in complete armour, round the warlike Kais, that valiant prince of Yemen, who stood *firm and brilliant* like a white cliff.

72. Then came a legion of high-born youths, whom nothing could restrain but our long and glittering spears ;

73. But we repelled them with strokes, *which made their blood gush from their sides*, as the water streams from the mouth of a bottle which contains it.

74. We drove them for refuge to the craggy hills of Thahlaan ; we thrust them before us, till the muscles of their thighs were breeched in gore.

75. We did with them a deed, the name of which God only knows ; and no revenge could be taken for the blood of men who sought their own fate.

76. Next advanced Hojar, son of Ommi Kathaam, with an army of Persians, clad in discoloured brass :

77. A lion in the conflict, of a ruddy hue, trampling on his prey ; but a vernal season of beneficence in every barren year.

78. Yet we smote them on the foreheads with the edges of our scimitars, which quivered in their flesh, like buckets drawn from a deep well encircled with stone.

79. *Secondly*, we broke the chains of Amriolkais, after his long imprisonment and anguish.

80. We forcibly revenged the death of Mondir, king of Gassaan, that his blood might not flow in vain.

81. We redeemed our captives with nine kings of illustrious race, whose spoils were exceedingly precious.

82. With the horses, with the dark horses of the sons of Aus, came whole squadrons, fierce as eagles with crooked beaks :

83. We scarce had passed through the cloud of dust when they turned their backs ; and then how dreadfully blazed the fire of our vengeance !

84. *Lastly*, we gave birth to Amru, the son of Omm Ayaas ; for not long ago were the bridal gifts presented to us, *as kinsmen*.

85. May our faithful admonition reach all our kindred tribes, extended as wide as our consanguinity, in plains beyond plains !



SHORTER PIECES
OF
ARABIAN POETRY.

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE,

By J. D. CARLYLE, B.D.

As the following translations were attempted at different times and with different impressions, their execution is, no doubt, very unequal: in general they will, I trust, be found as literal as the nature of two languages, so little resembling each other in their structure, will admit; in some few instances I have indulged myself in a greater latitude, and have given rather an imitation than a version;—in such a manner, however, I hope, as not in any place to have lost sight of the original idea of the writer.—From the Translator's Preface.

* * *

Most of the Translator's interesting Biographical Notices of the Authors and the subjects of these little pieces are, with some additional Notes, placed in the Appendix to this volume.—ED.



ON THE
TOMB OF MANO.

BY HASSAN ALASADY.

FRIENDS of my heart, who share my sighs !
Go seek the turf where Mano lies,
And woo the dewy clouds of Spring
'To sweep it with prolific wing.

Within that cell, beneath that heap,
Friendship and Truth and Honour sleep.
Beneficence, that used to clasp
The world within her ample grasp,
There rests entombed—of thought bereft ;
For were one conscious atom left,
New bliss, new kindness to display,
'T would burst the grave, and seek the day.

But though in dust thy relics lie,
'Thy virtues, Mano, ne'er shall die :
Though Nile's full stream be seen no more,
That spread his waves from shore to shore,
Still in the verdure of the plain
His vivifying smiles remain.

ON THE
TOMB OF SAYID.

BY ABD ALMALEC ALIHARITHY.

BLEST are the tenants of the tomb !
With envy I their lot survey ;
For Sayid shares the solemn gloom,
And mingles with their mouldering clay.

Dear youth ! I'm doomed thy loss to mourn,
When gathering ills around combine ;
And whither now shall Malec turn ?
Where look for any help but thine ?

At this dread moment, when the foe
My life with rage insatiate seeks,
In vain I strive to ward the blow—
My buckler falls, my sabre breaks.

Upon thy grassy tomb I knelt,
And sought from pain a short relief :
Th' attempt was vain—I only felt
Intenser pangs and livelier grief.

The bud of woe, no more repress,
Fed by the tears that drenched it there,
Shot forth and filled my labouring breast,
Soon to expand and shed despair.

But though of Sayid I'm bereft,
From whom the stream of bounty came.
Sayid a nobler meed has left—
Th' exhaustless heritage of fame.

Though mute the lips on which I hung,
Their silence speaks more loud to me
Than any voice from mortal tongue :
"What Sayid was, let Malec be !"



ON THE
DEATH OF HIS MISTRESS.

BY ABU SAHER ALHEDILY.

DOST thou wonder that I flew
Charmed to meet my Leila's view?
Dost thou wonder that I hung
Raptured on my Leila's tongue?—
If her ghost's funereal screech
Through the earth my grave should reach,
On that voice I loved so well
My transported ghost would dwell:
If in death I can descry
Where my Leila's relics lie,
Saher's dust will flit away,
There to join his Leila's clay.

ON AVARICE.

BY HATEM TAI.

HOW frail are riches and their joys !
Morn builds the heap which eve destroys ;
Yet can they leave one sure delight—
The thought that we've employed them right.

What bliss can wealth afford to me,
When life's last solemn hour I see?—
When Mavia's sympathising sighs
Will but augment my agonies?

Can hoarded gold dispel the gloom
That death must shed around his tomb?
Or cheer the ghost which hovers there,
And fills with shrieks the desert air?

What boots it, Mavia, in the grave,
Whether I loved to waste or save?
The hand that millions now can grasp
In death no more than mine shall clasp.

Were I ambitious to behold
Increasing stores of treasured gold,
Each tribe that roves the desert knows
I might be wealthy, if I chose.

But other joys can gold impart ;
Far other wishes warm my heart ;—
Ne'er may I strive to swell the heap
Till want and woe have ceased to weep.

With brow unaltered I can see
The hour of wealth or poverty :
I've drunk from both the cups of Fate,
Nor this could sink, nor that elate.

With fortune blest, I ne'er was found
To look with scorn on those around ;
Nor for the loss of paltry ore,
Shall Hatem seem to Hatem poor.



ON THE BATTLE OF SABLA.

BY JAAFER BEN ALBA.

SABLA, thou saw'st th' exulting foe
In fancied triumphs crowned ;
'Thou heard'st their frantic females throw
These galling taunts around :

"Make now your *choice*—the terms we give,
Desponding victims, hear :
'These fetters on your *hands* receive,
Or in your *hearts* the spear."

"And is the conflict o'er?" we cried ;
"And lie we at your feet ?
And dare you vauntingly decide
The fortune we must meet ?

"A brighter day we soon shall see,
Though now the prospect lowers ;
And conquest, peace, and liberty
Shall gild our future hours."

The foe advanced ;—in firm array
We rushed o'er Sabla's sands ;
And the red sabre marked our way
Amidst their yielding bands.

Then, as they writhed in Death's cold grasp,
We cried, "Our *choice* is made :
'These *hands* the sabres' hilt shall clasp,
Your *hearts* shall have the blade !"

VERSES

ADDRESSED TO A KINDRED TRIBE AT VARIANCE WITH
THE ONE TO WHICH THE POET BELONGED.

BY ALFADHEL IBN ALABAS.

WHY thus to passion give the rein?
Why seek your kindred tribe to wrong?
Why strive to drag to light again
The fatal feud entombed so long?

Think not, if fury ye display,
But equal fury we can deal;
Hope not, if wronged, but we repay
Revenge for every wrong we feel.

Why thus to passion give the rein?
Why seek the robe of peace to tear?
Rash youths, desist! your course restrain;
Or dread the wrath ye blindly dare!

Yet friendship we nor ask from foes,
Nor favour hope from you to prove:
We loved you not, great Allah knows!
Nor blamed you that ye could not love.

To each are different feelings given;
This slights, and that regards his brother:
'Tis ours to live—thanks to kind Heaven—
Hating and hated by each other.

ON HIS FRIENDS.

BY MESKIN ALDARAMY.

WITH conscious pride I view the band
Of faithful friends that round me stand .
With pride exult, that I alone
Can join these scattered gems in one :
For they're a wreath of pearls, and I
The silken cord on which they lie.

'Tis mine their inmost souls to see ;
Unlocked is every heart to me ;
To me they cling, on me they rest,
And I've a place in every breast :
For they're a wreath of pearls, and I
The silken cord on which they lie.

ON TEMPER.

BY NABEGAT BENI JAID.

YES, Leila, I swore, by the fire of thine eyes,
I ne'er could a sweetness unvaried endure :
The bubbles of spirit that sparkling arise
Forbid life to stagnate, and render it pure.

But yet, my dear maid, though thy spirit's my pride,
I'd wish for some sweetness to temper the bowl :
If life be ne'er suffered to rest or subside,
It may not be flat, but I fear 't will be foul.

THE SONG OF MAISUNA.

[MAISUNA was a daughter of the tribe of Calab; a tribe, according to Abulfeda, remarkable both for the purity of dialect spoken in it and for the number of poets it had produced. She was married, whilst very young, to the Khalif Mowiah; but this exalted situation by no means suited the disposition of Maisuna; and, amidst all the pomp and splendour of Damascus, she languished for the simple pleasures of her native desert.

These feelings gave birth to the following simple stanzas, which she took the greatest delight in singing, whenever she could find an opportunity to indulge her melancholy in private. She was unfortunately overheard one day by Mowiah, who was of course not a little offended, both with the discovery of his wife's sentiments, and with the contemptuous manner in which she had expressed herself with regard to her husband; and, as a punishment for her fault, he ordered her to retire from court. Maisuna immediately obeyed, and, taking her infant son Yezid with her, returned to Yemen; nor did she revisit Damascus till after the death of Mowiah, when Yezid ascended the throne.]

THE russet suit of camel's hair,
With spirits light and eye serene,
Is dearer to my bosom far
Than all the trappings of a queen.

The humble tent, and murmuring breeze
That whistles through its fluttering walls,
My unaspiring fancy please,
Better than towers and splendid halls.

Th' attendant colts, that bounding fly
And frolic by the litter's side,
Are dearer in Maisuna's eye
Than gorgeous mules in all their pride.

The watch-dog's voice, that bays whene'er
A stranger seeks his master's cot,
Sounds sweeter in Maisuna's ear
Than yonder trumpet's long-drawn note.

The rustic youth, unspoiled by art,
Son of my kindred, poor but free,
Will ever to Maisuna's heart
Be dearer, pampered fool, than thee !



VERSES

OF YEZID TO HIS FATHER, MOWIAH.

WHO REPROACHED HIM FOR DRUNKENNESS.

MUST then my failings from the shaft
Of anger ne'er escape?
And dost thou storm because I've quaffed
The water of the grape?

That I can thus from wine be driven,
Thou surely ne'er canst think—
Another reason thou hast given
Why I resolve to drink :

'Twas sweet the flowing cup to seize,
'Tis sweet thy rage to see ;
And, first, I drink myself to please,
And, next—to anger thee !

ON FATALISM.

BY THE IMAM SHAFAY MOHAMMED BEN IDRIS.

NOT always wealth, not always force,
A splendid destiny commands ;
'The lordly vulture gnaws the corse
That rots upon yon barren sands.

Nor want nor weakness still conspires
To bind us to a sordid state ;
'The fly, that with a touch expires,
Sips honey from the royal plate.

TO THE KHALIF

HAROUN ALRASHID,

ON HIS UNDERTAKING A PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA.

BY IBRAHIM BEN ADHIEM.

RELIGION'S gems can ne'er adorn
The flimsy robe by Pleasure worn :
Its feeble texture soon would tear,
And give those jewels to the air.

Thrice happy they who seek th' abode
Of peace and pleasure, in their God !
Who spurn the world, its joys despise,
And grasp at bliss beyond the skies.

ON THE
INAUGURATION OF HAROUN ALRASHID,
AND THE
APPOINTMENT OF YAHIA
TO BE HIS VIZIER.
BY ISAAC ALMOUSELY.

TH' affrighted sun erewhile had fled,
And hid his radiant face in night ;
A cheerless gloom the world o'erspread—
But Haroun came, and all was bright.

Again the sun shoots forth his rays ;
Nature is decked in beauty's robe :
For mighty Haroun's sceptre sways,
And Yahia's arm sustains the globe.

ON THE
RUIN OF THE BARMECIDES.

N O, Barmec ! time hath never shown
 So sad a change of wayward fate ;
Nor sorrowing mortals ever known
 A grief so true, a loss so great.

Spouse of the world ! thy soothing breast
 Did balm to every woe afford ;
And now, no more by thee caressed,
 The widowed world bewails her lord.

EPIGRAM

ON

TAHER BEN HOSEIN,

WHO WAS AMBIDEXTER AND ONE-EYED.

A PAIR of right hands and a single dim eye
Must form not a man, but a monster, they cry :
Change a hand to an eye, good Taher, if you can,
And a monster perhaps may be changed to man.

THE ADIEU.

BY ABU MOHAMMED.

THE boatmen shout, "'Tis time to part,
No longer we can stay ;"
'Twas then Maimuna taught my heart
How much a glance could say.

With trembling steps to me she came ;
"Farewell," she would have cried,
But ere her lips the word could frame,
In half-formed sounds it died.

Then bending down, with looks of love,
Her arms she round me flung,
And as the gale hangs on the grove,
Upon my breast she hung.

My willing arms embraced the maid,
My heart with raptures beat ;
While she but wept the more and said,
"Would we had never met !"

VERSES

ADDRESSED TO HIS MISTRESS, WHO HAD FOUND FAULT
WITH HIM FOR PROFUSION.

BY ABU TEMAN HABIB.

U NGENEROUS and mistaken maid,
To scorn me thus because I'm poor !
Canst thou a liberal hand upbraid,
For dealing round some worthless ore ?

To spare's the wish of little souls ;
The great but gather to bestow :
Yon current down the mountain rolls,
And stagnates in the swamp below.

TO A FEMALE CUPBEARER.

BY ABD ALSALAM BEN RAGBAN.

COME, Leila, fill the goblet up—
Reach round the rosy wine ;
Think not that we will take the cup
From any hand but thine.

A draught like this 'twere vain to seek,
No grape can such supply :
It steals its tint from Leila's cheek,
Its brightness from her eye.

SONGS

BY MASHDUD, RAKEEK, AND RAIS,

THE THREE MOST CELEBRATED IMPROVISATORI POETS IN
BAGDAD, AT AN ENTERTAINMENT GIVEN BY ABU ISY,
SON OF THE KHALIF MOTAWAKKEL.

THE preface with which these Poems are accompanied in the *Mostatraf*, at the same time that it explains the cause of their composition, gives no bad picture of Arabian manners during the flourishing period of the Khalifate :—

I was one day going to the mosque [says Abu Akramah, an author who supported himself at Bagdad by the profits of his pen], in order to see if I could pick up any little anecdote which might serve for the ground-work of a tale. As I passed the gate of Abu Isy, son of the Khalif Motawakkel, I saw Mashdud, the celebrated extempore poet, standing near it.

Mashdud saluted me, and asked whither I was going. I answered, to the mosque, and confessed without reserve the business which drew me thither. The poet, upon hearing this, pressed me to accompany him to the palace of Abu Isy. I declined, however, complying with his solicitations, conscious of the impropriety of intruding myself uninvited into the presence of a person of such rank and consequence. But Abu Isy's porter, overhearing our conversation, declared that he would put an end to my difficulties in a moment, by acquainting his master with my arrival. He did so; and in a short time two servants appeared, who took me up in their arms, and carried me into a most magnificent apartment, where their master was sitting.

Upon my introduction, I could not help feeling a little confused, but the Prince soon made me easy, by calling out in a good-natured manner, "Why do you stand blushing there, you simpleton? Take a seat." I obeyed: and in a few minutes a sumptuous collation was brought in, of which I partook. Nor was the juice of the grape forgotten: a cupbearer, brilliant as the morning star, poured out wine for us, more sparkling than the beams of the sun reflected by a mirror.

After the entertainment I arose, and having invoked every blessing to be showered down upon the head of my bounteous host, I was preparing to withdraw. But Abu Isy prevented me, and immediately ordered Mashdud, together with Rakeek and Rais, two musicians, whose fame was almost equal to Mashdud's, to be called in. They appeared accordingly and having taken their places, Mashdud gave us the following satiric song:

MASHDUD ON THE MONKS OF KHABBET.

TENANTS of yon hallowed fane!
Let me your devotions share:
There unceasing raptures reign—
None are ever sober there.

Crowded gardens, festive bowers,
Ne'er shall claim a thought of mine:
You can give in Khabbet's towers—
Purer joys and brighter wine.

Though your pallid faces prove
How you nightly vigils keep,
'Tis but that you ever love—
Flowing goblets more than sleep.

Though your eyeballs, dim and sunk,
Stream in penitential guise,
'Tis but that the wine you've drunk
Bubbles over from your eyes.

He had no sooner finished than Rakeek began, and in the same versification, and to the same air, sung as follows :

RAKEEK TO HIS FEMALE COMPANIONS.

THOUGH the peevish tongues upbraid,
Though the brows of wisdom scowl,
Fair ones, here on roses laid,
Careless will we quaff the bowl.

Let the cup, with nectar crowned,
Through the grove its beams display ;
It can shed a lustre round,
Brighter than the torch of Day.

Let it pass from hand to hand,
Circling still with ceaseless flight,
Till the streaks of gray expand
O'er the fleeting robe of Night.

As Night flits, she does but cry,
"Seize the moments that remain":
Thus our joys with yours shall vie,
Tenants of yon hallowed fane !

It was Rais' turn next, who charmed us with this plaintive little dialogue, supposed to pass betwixt himself and a Lady :

DIALOGUE BY RAIS.

RAIS.

M AID of sorrow, tell us why
Sad and drooping hangs thy head ?
Is it grief that bids thee sigh ?
Is it sleep that flies thy bed ?

LADY.

A H ! I mourn no fancied wound ;
Pangs too true this heart have wrung,
Since the snakes which curl around
Selim's brows my bosom stung.

Destined now to keener woes,
I must see the youth depart ;
He must go, and, as he goes,
Rend at once my bursting heart.

Slumber may desert my bed ;
'Tis not slumber's charms I seek :
'Tis the robe of beauty spread
O'er my Selim's rosy cheek.

TO A LADY WEEPING.

BY EBN ALRUMI.

WHEN I beheld thy blue eye shine
Through the bright drop that Pity drew,
I saw beneath those tears of thine
A blue-eyed violet bathed in dew.

The violet ever scents the gale,
Its hues adorn the fairest wreath ;
But sweetest through a dewy veil
Its colours glow, its odours breathe.

And thus thy charms in brightness rise :
When Wit and Pleasure round thee play ;
When Mirth sits smiling in thine eyes,
Who but *admires* their sprightly ray ?
But when through Pity's flood they gleam,
Who but must *love* their softened beam ?

ON A VALETUDINARIAN.

BY THE SAME.

SO careful is Isa, and anxious to last,
So afraid of himself is he grown,
He swears through two nostrils the breath goes too fast,
And he's trying to breathe through but one.

ON A MISER.

BY THE SAME.

HANG her—a thoughtless, wasteful fool,
She scatters corn where'er she goes !”
Quoth Hassan, angry at his mule,
That dropped a dinner to the crows.

TO CASSIM OBID ALLAH,

ON THE DEATH OF ONE OF HIS SONS.

BY ALI BEN AHMED BEN MANSOUR.

POOR Cassim ! thou art doomed to mourn,
By Destiny's decree ;
Whatever happen, it must turn
To misery for thee.

Two sons hadst thou, the one thy pride,
The other was thy pest ;
Ah, why did cruel Death decide
To snatch away the best ?

No wonder thou shouldst droop with woe,
Of such a child bereft :
But now thy tears must doubly flow,
For ah,—the other's left !

TO A FRIEND,

ON HIS BIRTHDAY.

WHEN born, in tears we saw thee drowned,
While thine assembled friends around
With smiles their joy confessed :
So live, that at thy parting hour,
They may the flood of sorrow pour,
And thou in smiles be dressed.

ON A CAT,

THAT WAS KILLED AS SHE WAS ATTEMPTING TO ROB
A DOVE-HOUSE.

BY IDN ALALAF ALNAHARWANY.

POOR Puss is gone !—'tis Fate's decree—
Yet I must still her loss deplore ;
For dearer than a child was she,
And ne'er shall I behold her more.

With many a sad presaging tear,
This morn I saw her steal away,
While she went on without a fear,
Except that she should miss her prey.

I saw her to the dove-house climb,
With cautious feet and slow she stept,
Resolved to balance loss of time
By eating faster than she crept.

Her subtle foes were on the watch,
And marked her course, with fury fraught ;
And while she hoped the birds to catch,
An arrow's point the huntress caught.

In fancy she had got them all,
And drunk their blood and sucked their breath ;
Alas ! she only got a fall,
And only drank the draught of death.

Why, why was pigeon's flesh so nice,
That thoughtless cats should love it thus?
Hadst thou but lived on rats and mice,
Thou hadst been living still, poor Puss !

Cursed be the taste, howe'er refined,
That prompts us for such joys to wish ;
And cursed the dainty where we find
Destruction lurking in the dish !



EPIGRAM

ON

EBN NAPHTA-WAH.

BY MOHAMMED BEN ZEID ALMOTAKALAM.

[IN order to understand Ben Zeid's Charade, we must remark that, in Arabic, *Naphtha* signifies a combustible not very much unlike our gunpowder, and that *Wah* is an exclamation of sorrow.]

BY the *former* with ruin and death we are curst ;
In the *latter* we grieve for the ills of the first ;
And as for the *whole*, where together they meet,
It's a drunkard, a liar, a thief, and a cheat.

FIRE: A RIDDLE.

THE loftiest cedars I can eat,
Yet neither paunch nor mouth have I ;
I storm whene'er you give me meat ;
Whene'er you give me drink, I die.

TO A LADY,

ON SEEING HER BLUSH.

BY THE KHALIF RADHI BILLAH.

L EILA, whene'er I gaze on thee
My altered cheek turns pale ;
While upon thine, sweet maid, I see
A deep'ning blush prevail.

Leila, shall I the cause impart
Why such a change takes place?—
The crimson stream deserts my heart
To mantle on thy face.

ON THE VICISSITUDES OF LIFE.

BY THE SAME.

MORTAL joys, however pure,
Soon their turbid source betray ;
Mortal bliss, however sure,
Soon must totter and decay.

Ye who now, with footsteps keen,
Range through Hope's delusive field,
Tell us what the smiling scene
To your ardent grasp can yield ?

Other youths have oft before
Deemed their joys would never fade,
Till themselves were seen no more—
Swept into oblivion's shade.

Who, with health and pleasure gay,
E'er his fragile state could know,
Were not age and pain to say—
Man is but the child of woe ?

TO A DOVE.

BY SERAGE ALWARAK.

THE Dove, to ease an aching breast,
In piteous murmurs vents her cares ;
Like me, she sorrows, for, oppressed,
Like me, a load of grief she bears.

Her plaints are heard in every wood,
While I would fain conceal my woes :
But vain's my wish—the briny flood,
The more I strive, the faster flows.

Sure, gentle bird, my drooping heart
Divides the pangs of love with thine ;
And plaintive murm'ings are *thy* part,
And silent grief and tears are *mine*.

ON A THUNDER-STORM.

BY IBRAHIM BEN KHIRET ABU ISAAC.

BRIGHT smiled the morn, till o'er its head
The clouds in thickened foldings spread
A robe of sable hue ;
Then, gathering round Day's golden King,
They stretched their wide o'ershadowing wing,
And hid him from our view.

The rain his absent beams deplored,
And, softened into weeping, poured
Its tears in many a flood ;
The lightning laughed, with horrid glare ;
The thunder growled, in rage ; the air
In silent sorrow stood.

TO HIS FAVOURITE MISTRESS.

BY SAIF ADDAULET, SULTAN OF ALEPPO.

I SAW their jealous eyeballs roll,
I saw them mark each glance of mine ;
I saw thy terrors, and my soul
Shared every pang that tortured thine.

In vain, to wean my constant heart,
Or quench my glowing flame, they strove :
Each deep-laid scheme, each envious art,
But waked my fears for her I love.

'Twas this compelled the stern decree
That forced thee to those distant towers,
And left me nought but love for thee,
To cheer my solitary hours.

Yet let not Abba sink depressed,
Nor separation's pangs deplore :
We meet not— 'tis to meet more blest ;
We parted— 'tis to part no more.

ON THE
CRUCIFIXION OF EBN BAKIAH.

BY ABU HASSAN ALANBARY.

W HATE'ER thy fate, in life and death,
Thou'rt doomed *above* us still to rise,
Whilst at a distance far *beneath*
We view thee with admiring eyes.

The gazing crowds still *round* thee throng,
Still to thy well-known voice repair,
As when erewhile thy hallowed tongue
Poured in the mosque the solemn prayer.

Still, generous Vizier, we survey
Thine arms *extended* o'er our head,
As lately, in the festive day,
When they were *stretched* thy gifts to shed.

Earth's narrow bound'ries strove in vain
To limit thy aspiring mind;
And now we see thy dust disdain
Within her breast to be confined.

The earth's too small for one so great;
Another mansion thou shalt have—
The clouds shall be thy winding-sheet,
The spacious vault of heaven thy grave.

ON THE
CAPRICES OF FORTUNE.

BY SHEMS ALMAALI CABUS,
THE DETHRONED SULTAN OF GEORGIA.

WHY should I blush that Fortune's frown
Dooms me life's humble paths to tread?
To live unheeded and unknown !
To sink forgotten to the dead !

'Tis not the good, the wise, the brave,
That surest shine, or highest rise :
The feather sports upon the wave,
The pearl in ocean's cavern lies.

Each lesser star that studs the sphere
Sparkles with undiminished light :
Dark and eclipsed alone appear
The Lord of Day, the Queen of Night.

L I F E.

L IKE sheep, we're doomed to travel o'er
The fated track to all assigned ;
These follow those that went before,
And leave the world to those behind.

As the flock seeks the pasturing shade,
Man presses to the future day ;
While Death, amidst the tufted glade,
Like the dun robber,* waits his prey.

* *i.e.*—The Wolf.

TO LEILA.

LEILA, with too successful art,
Has spread for me Love's cruel snare ;
And now, when she has caught my heart,
She laughs, and leaves it to despair.

Thus the poor sparrow pants for breath,
Held captive by a playful boy ;
And while it drinks the draught of death,
The thoughtless child looks on with joy.

Ah ! were its fluttering pinions free,
Soon would it bid its chains adieu ;
Or did the child its sufferings see,
He'd pity and relieve them too.

EXTEMPORE VERSES

ON THE SULTAN CARAWASH, HIS PRINCIPAL MUSICIAN
BARKAIDY, HIS VIZIER EBN FADHI, AND HIS
CHAMBERLAIN ABU JABER.

BY EBN ALRAMACRAM.

LOWERING as Barkaidy's face,
The wintry night came in,
Cold as the music of his bass,
And lengthened as his chin.

Sleep from my aching eyes had fled,
And kept as far apart
As sense from Ebn Fadhi's head,
Or virtue from his heart.

The dubious paths my footsteps balked,
I slipped along the sod,
As if on Jaber's faith I'd walked,
Or on his truth had trod.

At length the rising King of Day
Burst on the gloomy wood,
Like Carawash's eye, whose ray
Dispenses every good.

ON THE
DEATH OF A SON.

BY ALI BEN MOHAMMED ALTAHMANY.

TYRANT of Man ! Imperious Fate !
I bow before thy dread decree ;
Nor hope in this uncertain state
To find a seat secure from thee.

Life is a dark, tumultuous stream,
With many a care and sorrow foul ;
Yet thoughtless mortals vainly deem
That it can yield a limpid bowl.

Think not that stream will backward flow,
Or cease its destined course to keep ;
As soon the blazing spark shall glow
Beneath the surface of the deep.

Believe not Fate, at thy command,
Will grant a meed she never gave ;
As soon the airy tower shall stand
That's built upon a passing wave.

Life is a sleep of threescore years ;
Death bids us wake and hail the light ;
And man, with all his hopes and fears,
Is but a phantom of the night.

ON MODERATION IN OUR PLEASURES.

BY ABU ALCASSIM EBN TABATABA.

HOW oft does passion's grasp destroy
The pleasure that it strives to gain !
How soon the thoughtless course of joy
Is doomed to terminate in pain !

When Prudence would thy steps delay,
She but restrains to make thee blest ;
Whate'er from joy she lops away
But heightens and secures the rest.

Wouldst thou a trembling flame expand
That hastens in the lamp to die ?
With careful touch, with sparing hand,
The feeding stream of life supply.

But if thy flask profusely sheds
A rushing torrent o'er the blaze,
Swift round the sinking flame it spreads,
And kills the fire it fain would raise.

ON THE
VALE OF BOZAA.

BY AHMED BEN YOUSEF ALMENAZY.

THE intertwining boughs for thee
Have wove, sweet dell, a verdant vest,
And thou in turn shall give to me
A verdant couch upon thy breast.

To shield me from Day's fervid glare,
Thine oaks their fostering arms extend,
As, anxious o'er her infant care,
I've seen a watchful mother bend.

A brighter cup, a sweeter draught,
I gather from that rill of thine,
Than maddening drunkards ever quaffed,
Than all the treasures of the vine.

So smooth the pebbles on its shore,
That not a maid can thither stray,
But counts her strings of jewels o'er,
And thinks the pearls have slipped away.

TO ADVERSITY.

BY ABU MENBAA CARAWASH, SULTAN OF MOUSEL.

HAIL, chastening friend, Adversity ! 'tis thine
The mental ore to temper and refine ;
To cast in Virtue's mould the yielding heart,
And Honour's polish to the mind impart.

Without thy wakening touch, thy plastic aid,
I'd lain the shapeless mass that Nature made ;
But formed, great artist, by thy magic hand,
I gleam a sword, to conquer and command.

ON
THE INCOMPATIBILITY OF PRIDE
AND TRUE GLORY.

BY ABU ALOLA.

THINK not, Abdallah, Pride and Fame
Can ever travel hand in hand ;
With breast opposed, and adverse aim,
On the same narrow path they stand.

Thus Youth and Age together meet,
And Life's divided moments share :
This can't advance till that retreat ;
What's here increased, is lessened there.

And thus the falling shades of Night
Still struggle with the lucid ray,
And ere they stretch their gloomy flight,
Must win the lengthened space from Day.

ON THE
DEATH OF NEDHAM ALMOLK,
VIZIER TO THE THREE FIRST SELJUK
SULTANS OF PERSIA.
BY SHEBAL ADDAULET.

THY virtues, famed through every land,
Thy spotless life in age and youth,
Prove thee a pearl,* by Nature's hand
Formed out of purity and truth.

Too long its beams of orient light
Upon a thankless world were shed :
ALLAH has now revenged the slight,
And called it to its native bed.

* Nedham, in Arabic, signifies a string of pearls.

VERSES

ADDRESSED BY WALADATA, DAUGHTER OF MOHAMMED
ALMOSTAKFI BILLAH, KHALIF OF SPAIN, TO SOME
YOUNG MEN, WHO HAD PRETENDED A PASSION
FOR HERSELF AND HER COMPANIONS.

WHEN you told us our glances, soft, timid, and
mild,

Could occasion such wounds in the heart,
Can ye wonder that yours, so ungoverned and wild,
Some wounds to our cheeks should impart?

The wounds on our cheeks are but transient, I own,
With a blush they appear and decay;
But those on the heart, fickle youths, ye have shown
To be even more transient than they.

VERSES

ADDRESSED TO HIS DAUGHTERS, DURING
HIS IMPRISONMENT,

BY MOTAMMED BEN ABAD, SULTAN OF SEVILLE.

[“UPON a certain festival,” says Ebn Khocan, a contemporary writer, “during the confinement of Motammed, he was waited upon by his children, who came to receive his blessing, and to offer up their prayers for his welfare. Amongst these some were females, and their appearance was truly deplorable. They were naturally beauteous as the moon, but, from the rags which covered them, they seemed like the moon under an eclipse : their feet were bare and bleeding, and every trace of their former splendour was completely effaced. At this melancholy spectacle their unfortunate father gave way to his sorrow in the following verses.”]

WITH jocund heart and cheerful brow,
I used to hail the festal morn :
How must Motammed greet it now?—
A prisoner, helpless and forlorn ;

While these dear maids, in beauty's bloom,
With want oppressed, with rags o'erspread,
By sordid labours at the loom
Must earn a poor, precarious bread.

Those feet, that never touched the ground
Till musk or camphor strewed the way,
Now, bare and swoll'n with many a wound,
Must struggle through the miry clay.

Those radiant cheeks are veiled in woe,
A shower descends from every eye ;
And not a starting tear can flow
That wakes not an attending sigh.

Fortune, that whilom owned my sway,
And bowed obsequious to my nod,
Now sees me destined to obey,
And bend beneath oppression's rod.

Ye mortals, with success elate,
Who bask in Hope's delusive beam,
Attentive view Motammed's fate,
And own that bliss is but a dream.



A SERENADE

TO HIS SLEEPING MISTRESS.

BY ALI BEN ABD ALGANY, OF CORDOVA.

SURE Harut's* potent spells were breathed
Upon that magic sword, thine eye ;
For if it wounds us thus while sheathed,
When drawn 'tis vain its edge to fly.

How canst thou doom me, cruel fair,
Plunged in the hell† of scorn, to groan ?
No idol e'er this heart could share—
This heart has worshipped thee alone.

* A wicked angel, who is permitted to tempt mankind by teaching them magic : see the legend respecting him in Sale's Korân.

† The poet here alludes to the punishments denounced in the Korân against those who worship a plurality of gods : "their couch shall be in hell, and over them shall be coverings of fire." Sur. 2.

THE INCONSISTENT.

TO A LADY, UPON HER REFUSAL OF A PRESENT OF
MELONS, AND HER REJECTION OF THE
ADDRESSES OF AN ADMIRER.

WHEN I sent you my melons, you cried out with
scorn,

“ They ought to be *heavy*, and *wrinkled*, and *yellow* : ”

When I offered myself, whom those graces adorn,

You flouted, and called me an *ugly old* fellow !

ON THE
CAPTURE OF JERUSALEM,
IN THE FIRST CRUSADE.

BY ALMODHAFFER ALABIWERDY.

FROM our distended eyeballs flow
A mingled stream of tears and blood ;
Nor care we feel, nor wish we know,
But who shall pour the largest flood.

But what defence can tears afford ?
What aid supply in this dread hour ?
When, kindled by the sparkling sword,
War's raging flames the land devour !

No more let sleep's seductive charms
Upon your torpid souls be shed :
A crash like this, such dire alarms,
Might burst the slumbers of the dead.

Think where your dear companions lie—
Survey their fate, and hear their woes :
How some through trackless deserts fly,
Some in the vulture's maw repose ;

While some, more wretched still, must bear
The tauntings of a Christian's tongue ;—
Hear this—and blush ye not to wear
The silken robe of peace so long ?

Remember what ensanguined showers
The Syrian plains with crimson dyed ;
And think how many blooming flowers
In Syrian forts their beauties hide.

Arabian youths ! in such a cause
Can ye the voice of glory slight ?
Warriors of Persia ! Can ye pause,
Or fear to mingle in the fight ?

If neither piety nor shame
Your breasts can warm, your souls can move,
Let emulation's bursting flame
Wake you to Vengeance and to Love !



TO A LADY,

WHO ACCUSED HER LOVER OF FLATTERY.

N O, Abla, no—when Selim tells
Of many an unknown grace that dwells
In Abla's face and mien ;
When he describes the sense refined
That lights thine eye, and fills thy mind,
By thee alone unseen,—

'Tis not that, drunk with Love, he sees
Ideal charms which only please
Through Passion's partial veil ;
'Tis not that Flattery's glozing tongue
Hath basely framed an idle song,
But Truth that breathed the tale.

Thine eyes unaided ne'er could trace
Each opening charm, each varied grace,
That round thy person plays :
Some must remain concealed from thee,
For Selim's watchful eye to see,
For Selim's tongue to praise.

One polished mirror can declare
That eye so bright, that face so fair,
That cheek which shames the rose ;
But how thy mantle waves behind,
How float thy tresses on the wind,
Another only shows.

EPIGRAM
ON
ABU ALCHAIR SELAMU,
AN EGYPTIAN PHYSICIAN.

BY GEORGE, A PHYSICIAN OF ANTIOCH.

WHOEVER has recourse to thee
Can hope for health no more :
He's launched into perdition's sea,
A sea without a shore.

Where'er admission thou canst gain,
Where'er thy phiz can pierce,
At once the Doctor they retain,
The mourners and the hearse.

TO A LITTLE MAN WITH A VERY
LARGE BEARD.

BY ISAAC BEN KHALIF.

HOW can thy chin that burden bear?
Is it all gravity to shock?
Is it to make the people stare,
And be thyself a laughing-stock?

When I behold thy little feet
After thy beard obsequious run,
I always fancy that I meet
Some father followed by his son.

A man like thee scarce e'er appeared;
A beard like thine, where shall we find it?
Surely thou cherishest thy beard,
In hopes to hide thyself behind it!

LAMIAT ALAJEM.

BY MAUID EDDIN ALHASSAN ABU ISMAEL ALTOGRAI.

[THE scene lies in the desert, where the poet is supposed to be travelling along with a caravan. The time is midnight, and while he is kept awake by his sorrows, his fellow-travellers are slumbering around him.

The author opens the poem with a panegyric upon his own integrity, and the magnanimity he has shown under various misfortunes; these he is proceeding to recount, when he seems suddenly struck with the sight of a friend lying asleep at some distance from him. The poet adjures this friend to arise, and accompany him in an enterprise, the object of which was to visit a lady, whose habitation was in the neighbourhood. Fired with the idea of his mistress, he breaks forth into a description of the happiness of those who are admitted to her society, and resolves that nothing shall divert him from his purpose. His friend, however, appearing unmoved by his solicitations, he at length gives up his intention in despair, and after many bitter invectives against cowardice and sloth, returns to the subject of his misfortunes, and concludes the poem with an ardent exhortation to mistrust mankind, and in every contingency to rely solely upon our own prudence and fortitude.]

NO kind supporting hand I meet,
But Fortitude shall stay my feet;
No borrowed splendours round me shine,
But Virtue's lustre all is mine:
A fame unsullied still I boast,
Obscured, concealed, but never lost—
The same bright orb that led the day
Pours from the west his mellowed ray.

Zaura, farewell ! No more I see
Within thy walls a home for me ;
Deserted, spurned, aside I'm tossed,
As an old sword whose scabbard's lost :
Around thy walls I seek in vain,
Some bosom that will soothe my pain—
No friend is near to breathe relief,
Or brother to partake my grief.

For many a melancholy day
Through desert vales I've wound my way ;
The faithful beast whose back I press .
In groans laments her lord's distress ;
In every quivering of my spear
A sympathetic sigh I hear ;
The camel, bending with his load,
And struggling through the thorny road,
Midst the fatigues that bear him down,
In Hassan's woes forgets his own ;—
Yet cruel friends my wanderings chide,
My sufferings slight, my toils deride.

Once wealth, I own, engrossed each thought ;
There was a moment when I sought
The glittering stores Ambition claims
To feed the wants his fancy frames ;
But now 'tis past : the changing day
Has snatched my high-built hopes away,
And bade this wish my labours close,—
Give me not riches, but repose.

'Tis he ! that mien my friend declares,
That stature, like the lance he bears ;
I see that breast which ne'er contained
A thought by fear or folly stained,
Whose powers can every change obey,
In business grave, in trifles gay,
And formed each varying taste to please,
Can mingle dignity with ease.

What though, with magic influence, sleep
O'er every closing eyelid creep !
Though, drunk with its oblivious wine,
Our comrades on their bales recline,
My Selim's trance I sure can break—
Selim, 'tis I, 'tis I who speak !
Dangers on every side impend,
And sleep'st thou, careless of thy friend ?
Thou sleep'st, while every star from high
Beholds me with a wakeful eye ;
Thou changest, ere the changeful Night
Hath streaked her fleeting robe with white.

'Tis Love that hurries me along,
I'm deaf to Fear's repressive song ;
The rocks of Idham I'll ascend,
Though adverse darts each path defend,
And hostile sabres glitter there,
To guard the tresses of the fair.

Come, Selim, let us pierce the grove,
While night befriends, to seek my love.

The clouds of fragrance, as they rise,
Shall mark the place where Ablā lies.
Around her tent my jealous foes,
Like lions, spread their watchful rows ;
Amidst their bands her bower appears,
Embosomed in a wood of spears—
A wood still nourished by the dews
Which smiles and softest looks diffuse.

Thrice happy youths ! who midst yon shades
Sweet converse hold with Idham's maids !
What bliss to view them gild the hours,
And brighten Wit and Fancy's powers,
While every foible they disclose
New transport gives, new graces shows !
'Tis *theirs* to raise with conscious art
The *flames* of love in every heart ;
'Tis *yours* to raise with festive glee
The *flames* of hospitality :
Smit by *their* glances *lovers* lie,
And helpless sink, and hopeless *die* ;
While, *slain* by *you*, the *stately steed*
To crown the feast is doomed to bleed—
To crown the feast, where copious flows
The sparkling juice that soothes your woes,
That lulls each care and heals each wound,
As the enlivening bowl goes round.

Amidst those vales my eager feet
Shall trace my Ablā's dear retreat ;

A gale of health may hover there,
To breathe some solace to my care.
I fear not Love—I bless the dart
Sent in a glance to pierce the heart :
With willing breast the sword I hail
That wounds me through a half-closed veil ;
Though lions, howling round the shade,
My footsteps haunt, my walks invade,
No fears shall drive me from the grove,
If Abia listen to my love.

Ah, Selim ! shall the spells of ease
Thy friendship chain, thine ardour freeze ?
Wilt thou, enchanted thus, decline
Each generous thought, each bold design ?
Then far from men some cell prepare,
Or build a mansion in the air ;
But yield to us ambition's tide
Who fearless on its waves can ride ;—
Enough for thee, if thou receive
The scattered spray the billows leave.

Contempt and want the wretch await
Who slumbers in an abject state—
Midst rushing crowds, by toil and pain,
The meed of Honour we must gain ;
At Honour's call, the camel hastes
Through trackless wilds and dreary wastes,
Till in the glorious race she find
The fleetest coursers left behind :

By toils like these alone, he cries,
Th' adventurous youths to greatness rise :
If bloated indolence were fame,
And pompous ease our noblest aim,
The orb that regulates the day
Would ne'er from Aries' mansion stray.

I've bent at Fortune's shrine too long ;
Too oft she heard my suppliant tongue ;
Too oft has mocked my idle prayers,
While fools and knaves engrossed her cares ;
Awake for them, asleep to me,
Heedless of worth she scorned each plea.
Ah ! had her eyes, more just, surveyed
The different claims which each displayed,
Those eyes, from partial fondness free,
Had slept to them, and waked for me.

But midst my sorrows and my toils,
Hope ever soothed my breast with smiles ;
Her hand removed each gathering ill,
And oped life's closing prospects still.
Yet spite of all her friendly art,
The specious scene ne'er gained my heart :
I loved it not, although the day,
Met my approach, and cheered my way ;
I loath it, now the hours retreat,
And fly me with reverted feet.

My soul, from every tarnish free,
May boldly vaunt her purity ;

But ah, how keen, however bright
The sabre glitter to the sight,
Its splendour's lost, its polish vain,
Till some bold hand the steel sustain.

Why have my days been stretched by Fate
To see the vile and vicious great,
While I, who led the race so long,
Am last and meanest of the throng?
Ah, why has Death so long delayed
To wrap me in his friendly shade?—
Left me to wander thus alone,
When all my heart held dear is gone !

But let me check these fretful sighs—
Well may the base above me rise,
When yonder planets, as they run,
Mount in the sky above the sun.
Resigned I bow to Fate's decree,
Nor hope his laws will change for me :
Each shifting scene, each varying hour,
But proves the ruthless tyrant's power.

But though with ills unnumbered cursed,
We owe to faithless man the worst ;
For man can smile with specious art,
And plant a dagger in the heart.
He only's fitted for the strife
Which fills the boist'rous paths of life,
Who, as he treads the crowded scenes,
Upon no kindred bosom leans.

Too long my foolish heart had deemed
Mankind as virtuous as they seemed ;
The spell is broke, their faults are bare,
And now I see them as they are :
Truth from each tainted breast has flown,
And Falsehood marks them all her own.
Incredulous I listen now
To every tongue and every vow,
For still there yawns a gulf between
Those honeyed words and what they mean.
With honest pride elate I see
The sons of Falsehood shrink from me,
As from the right line's even way
The biassed curves deflecting stray.—
But what avails it to complain ?
With souls like theirs reproof is vain ;
If honour e'er such bosoms share,
The sabre's point must fix it there.

But why exhaust life's vapid bowl,
And suck the dregs with sorrow foul,
When long ere this my youth has drained
Whatever zest the cup contained ?
Why should we mount upon the wave
And ocean's yawning horrors brave,
When we may swallow from the flask
Whate'er the wants of mortals ask ?

Contentment's realms no fears invade,
No cares annoy, no sorrows shade ;

There, placed secure, in peace we rest,
Nor aught demand to make us blest.
While Pleasure's gay fantastic bower,
The splendid pageant of an hour,
Like yonder meteor in the skies,
Flits with a breath, no more to rise.

As through life's various walks we're led,
May Prudence hover o'er our head !
May she our words, our actions guide,
Our faults correct, our secrets hide !
May she, where'er our footsteps stray,
Direct our paths and clear the way !
Till, every scene of tumult past,
She bring us to repose at last—
Teach us to love that peaceful shore,
And roam through Folly's wilds no more !



TO YOUTH.

BY EBN ALRABIA, IN HIS OLD AGE.

YES, Youth, thou'rt fled, and I am left,
Like yonder desolated bower,
By Winter's ruthless hand bereft
Of every leaf and every flower.

With heaving heart and streaming eyes,
I wooed thee to prolong thy stay,
But vain were all my tears and sighs—
Thou only fled'st more fast away.

Yet though thou fled'st away so fast,
I can recall thee if I will ;
For I can talk of what is past,
And while I talk, enjoy thee still.

ON LOVE.

BY ABU ALI, THE MATHEMATICIAN.

[ABU ALI flourished in Egypt about A.H. 530, and was equally celebrated as a mathematician and as a poet. In the following odd composition he seems to have united these two discordant characters.]

I NEVER knew a sprightly fair
That was not dear to me ;
And freely I my heart could share
With every one I see.

It is not *this* or *that* alone
On whom my choice would fall :
I do not more incline to one
Than I incline to all.

The circle's bounding line are they ;
Its centre is my heart ;
My ready love, the equal ray
That flows to every part.

A REMONSTRANCE WITH A DRUNKARD.

BY YAHIA BEN SALAMET.

[THIS author was a native of Syria, and died at Miafarakır, in the year of the Hejra 553.]

AS drenched in wine, the other night,
Zeid from the banquet sallied,
Thus I reproved his drunken plight,
Thus he my prudence rallied :

"In beverage so *impure* and *vile*
How canst thou thus delight?"

"My cups," he answered, with a smile,
"Are *generous* and *bright*."

"Beware those dangerous draughts," I cried ;
"With *love* the goblet flows."

"And cursed is he," the youth replied,
"Who *hatred* only knows!"

"Those cups too soon, with sickness fraught,
Thy stomach shall deplore."

"Then soon," he cried, "the noxious draught
And all its ills are o'er."

"Rash youth ! thy guilty joys resign"—

"I will," at length he said :

"I vow I'll bid adieu to wine—
As soon as I am dead !"

VERSES

ADDRESSED BY THE KHALIF ALMOKTAFI LIAMRILLAH
TO A LADY, WHO PRETENDED A PASSION FOR
HIM IN HIS OLD AGE.

THOUGH such unbounded love you swear,
'Tis only art I see :
Can I believe that one so fair
Should ever doat on me ?

Say that you hate, and freely show
That Age displeases Youth ;
And I may love you, when I know
That you can tell the truth.

ON PROCRASTINATION.

BY HEBAT ALLAH IBN ALTALMITH.

YOUTH is a drunken, noisy hour,
 With every folly fraught ;
But man, by Age's chastening power,
 Is sobered into thought.

Then we resolve our faults to shun,
 And shape our course anew ;
But ere the wise reform's begun,
 Life closes on our view.

The travellers thus, who wildly roam,
 Or heedlessly delay,
Are left, when they should reach their home,
 Benighted on the way.

ON THE
EARLY DEATH OF ABU ALHASSAN ALI,
SON OF THE KHALIF ALNASSAR LEDIN ALLAH.

BY CAMAL EDDIN BEN ALNABIT.

SOON hast thou run the race of life,
Nor could our tears thy speed control :
Still in the coursers' gen'rous strife
The best will soonest reach the goal.

As Death upon his hand turns o'er
The different gems the world displays,
He seizes first, to swell his store,
The brightest jewel he surveys.

Thy name, by every breath conveyed,
Stretched o'er the globe its boundless flight ;
Alas ! in eve the length'ning shade
But lengthens to be lost in night !

If gracious ALLAH bade thee close
Thy youthful eyes so soon on day,
'Tis that he readiest welcomes those
Who love him best, and best obey.

THE INTERVIEW.

A SONG IN THE RHYTHM OF THE ORIGINAL,
WITH THE MUSIC ANNEXED.

[THE music to this little piece was written down, by a friend, from the singing of David Zamir, a native of Bagdad, who resided with the translator for some time at Cambridge.]

DARKNESS closed around, loud the tempest
drove,

When through yonder glen I saw my lover rove,
Dearest youth !

Soon he reached our cot, weary, wet, and cold,
But warmth, wine, and I to cheer his spirits strove,
Dearest youth !

“How, my love,” cried I, “durst thou hither stray
Through the gloom, nor fear the ghosts that haunt the
grove,

Dearest youth ?”

“In this heart,” said he, “fear no seat can find,
When each thought is filled alone with thee and love,
Dearest maid !”

To face Page 168.

The image displays six staves of musical notation in bass clef, 3/4 time. The notation includes various fingerings (e.g., 6, 4, 3, 2, 1) and articulations (e.g., slurs, accents, staccato marks). The first staff begins with a 4-measure rest. The notation is as follows:

- Staff 1: 4-measure rest, then notes with fingerings 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6.
- Staff 2: Notes with fingerings 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6.
- Staff 3: Notes with fingerings 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6.
- Staff 4: Notes with fingerings 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6.
- Staff 5: Notes with fingerings 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6.
- Staff 6: Notes with fingerings 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6.

